

SELECTIONS FROM DRYDEN

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INTRODUCTION

THE student who wishes to know something of the development of English literature during the seventeenth century, can hardly find a book more suited to his purpose than the works of John Dryden. No great poet ever more faithfully reflected the exact spirit of the age in which he wrote. Defoe, who could never forgive his change of politics, writes bitterly of the genius 'flung and pitched upon a swivel', which 'would turn round as fast as the times, and instruct him how to write elegies to O(liver) C(romwell) and King C(harles) the Second with all the coherence imaginable'. Unjust as such criticism is, the fact remains that Dryden always takes his inspiration from the prevailing fashion of the moment. His earlier poems contain conceits worthy of Donne or Cowley in their worst moments,¹ his later lyrics are the most perfect examples of the graceful, artificial love-song of the Restoration. Waller's flowing couplets replace the rougher verse of the 'metaphysical' poets, and Dryden writes in the heroic couplet. Butler delights the town with the satiric wit of *Hudibras*, and Dryden produces *Absalom and Achitophel*. Whatever other men are doing, Dryden does and—with the one great exception of epic blank verse—does better. The *Annus Mirabilis* has its conceits, but it has also a dignity and simplicity far beyond the power of Donne or Cowley. The description of the sea-fight is admirable in its vigour and restraint. It appeals to us

¹ See *Annus Mirabilis*, stanza 281.

with something of the force of an old ballad, though the poem as a whole, with its constant allusions to the classics, its wealth of paraphrase and quotation, betrays the hand of the scholar. It is worth noticing that in this poem Dryden takes the quatrain, first employed for a serious poem of any length, by Davenant in his *Gondibert* (1751), and shows with what skill the metre can be used. Once more he borrows an idea, and so betters it that borrowing is no plagiarism.

Dryden's command of metre is indeed one of his most striking characteristics. Shelley's criticism of Wordsworth—

For language was in Peter's hand,
Like clay, while he was yet a potter—

might well be applied to the author of the *Hind and the Panther* and *Absalom and Achitophel*. No other English poet has succeeded in writing thousands of heroic verses without ever becoming tedious or monotonous. The very epigrammatic terseness of Pope's lines makes them wearisome after a few pages, but Dryden has the art which conceals all effort. He varies the position of the caesura, he employs triplet and alexandrine, and all with such apparent inevitability that it is not until we turn to the work of some other master of the heroic couplet, and compare Dryden with Pope or Churchill, that we realize the marvellous technical skill which has been displayed.

Nor is his craftsmanship less in his other works. Many of his lyrics are exquisite in form, and in such poems as *Alexander's Feast* he uses repetitions with an effectiveness which is lacking in the poems of his contemporaries. His plays themselves, bombastic and absurd as are most of

his tragedies, are redeemed from insignificance by the occasional beauty of their language

It is this felicity of expression which appeals so strongly to Johnson. His criticism of Dryden's prose, 'every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place,'¹ remains the truest appreciation of it which has been written. In his prose style, as in versification, Dryden reflects the spirit of his age, and, without being an innovator, does much to develop a tendency already in existence. It was a time of transition. The passion and exaltation of the earlier part of the century were gradually giving way to a desire for lucidity and precision. The Bible had hitherto moulded the speech of both Anglican and Puritan,² but Boileau was the Bible of the new generation of authors, and in his *Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the Last Age* we find Dryden endeavouring to bind prose in as strict fetters as those which confine the feet of Poetry herself.

Dryden is in truth one of the most tragic figures in English literature. He had a power of expression such as is given to few men, and Nature intended him to have the soul as well as the voice of a poet. But some evil influence endowed him at his birth with a passion for popularity. Throughout his life he saw the best and chose the second best. 'If the humour of this (age) be for low comedy, small incidents and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse'² he writes, and again—

They who have best succeeded on the stage
Have still conform'd their genius to the age.³

¹ *Lives of the Poets*

² *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

³ Epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada*

maxims worldly wise enough, though it is impossible to mistake the bitterness which underlies them, but which are hardly inspiring. No man can deliberately give himself over to the production of work which he knows to be inferior, without some deterioration of his genius. At one time Dryden undertook to provide the players of the King's House with three dramas a year. That he failed to keep such a promise is a comparatively small matter. In later life he himself apologized for his plays. 'I remember some verses of my own *Maximin*¹ and *Almanzor*² which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, and which I heartily wish in the same fire with Statius and Chapman,' he writes. 'All I can say for those passages, which are, I hope not many, is, that I knew they were bad enough to please, even when I writ them, but I repent of them among my sins.'³ And he answers Collier's attack on his comedies, with a spirited and dignified confession of weakness. 'I shall say the less of Mr Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly, and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine which can truly be argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph, if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance.'⁴ The pity of it lies in the fact that he wasted years of his life in producing stuff which he, better than any one else, knew to be worthless. It is only necessary to turn from his other plays to *All for Love*, 'the only play I ever writ to please myself,' to see what he might have done if his

¹ The Tyrant of Rome in *Tyrannic Love*

² Hero of *The Conquest of Granada*

³ Dedication to *The Spanish Friar*

⁴ *Preface to the Fables*

chief endeavours had not been ' to delight the age in which I live ' ¹

But if Dryden fails as a dramatist, as a critic he has an unchallenged right to a place in the first rank His satire is extraordinarily brilliant, he has a genius for devising the happy phrase, and for seizing on exactly the appropriate situation He has neither the crudeness of Butler—who too often owes his effect to mere farcical absurdity—nor the venom of Pope—who makes no pretence of fairness in his judgements In *Macflecknoe* alone does he condescend to attack a personal enemy, and that after he had been repeatedly insulted by him But it is wit and skill in versification only that keep his satires alive to-day They have no touch of that intense feeling which makes Ben Jonson break into passages of burning invective, they are ' occasional ' pieces, and apply not to human nature, but to the particular event of the moment But in criticism it is far otherwise Here Dryden is immortal in thought as well as in expression At times he is hampered by the prejudices of his day He fails to appreciate the beauty of Milton's early poems, he is pained by the irregularity of Shakespeare's dramas But these are small points of individual taste, and in more than one instance we see him outgrowing his earlier belief, and finding later a more just appreciation of the relation between poetry and expression What is of lasting importance is that he first taught his countrymen the science of criticism Instead of the fine but somewhat vague poetics of Sidney or Daniel, or the dry technicalities of Gabriel Harvey or Webbe, he gave men at once general principles and their

¹ *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

particular application. He has a remarkable power of going straight to the root of the matter, and his combination of keen poetic appreciation and sound common sense gives his criticisms unusual force. He never regards any work by itself, at every turn he compares one author with another, or illustrates his point by examples from the literature of France, Rome, or Greece. He was the first critic to attempt a serious appreciation of the work of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Milton, and many of his criticisms remain household words to day. Here he follows no leader, makes no attempt to win popularity by deferring to the taste of the day. As a critic he speaks out fearlessly, and his words have all the weight of genuine conviction. Had he allowed his feelings the freedom in verse that he allows them in prose, he would rank, not as the greatest of all poets of the second class, but with Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton.

The following selections have been made with the intention of illustrating his work (i) as a master of style and versification, (ii) as a critic, (iii) as a satirist.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Christie's *Select Poems by Dryden* for much of the information contained in the biographical notes to the *Annus Mirabilis*.

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STYLE AND VERSIFICATION

DEFENCE OF THE EPILOGUE

1672

As for the other part of refining, which consists in receiving new words and phrases, I shall not insist much on it. It is obvious that we have admitted many, some of which we wanted, and therefore our language is the richer for them, as it would be by importation of bullion. Others are rather ornamental than necessary, yet, by their admission, the language is become more courtly, and our thoughts are better dressed. These are to be found scattered in the writers of our age, and it is not my business to collect them. They, who have lately written with most care, have, I believe, taken the rule of Horace¹ for their guide, that is, not to be too hasty in receiving of words, but rather to stay till custom has made them familiar to us.

*Quem penes arbitrium est, et ius, et norma loquendi*²

For I cannot approve of their way of refining, who corrupt our English idiom by mixing it too much with French; that is a sophistication of language, not an improvement of it, a turning English into French, rather than a refining of English by French. We meet daily with those fops, who value themselves on their travelling, and pretend they cannot express their meaning in English, because they would put off to us some French phrase of the last edition, without considering, that, for aught they know, we have a better of our own. But these are not the men who are to refine us, their talent is to prescribe fashions,

¹ B C 65-8. His *Satires* and *Epistles* were imitated by Pope, and his *Ars Poetica* was much studied by seventeenth and eighteenth century writers in France and England.

² 'With whom rests the judgement, the law, and the standard of correct speaking.'

not words at best, they are only serviceable to a writer, so as Ennius¹ was to Virgil. He may *aurum ex stercore colligere*² for 'tis hard if, amongst many insignificant phrases, there happen not something worth preserving, though they themselves, like Indians, know not the value of their own commodity.

There is yet another way of improving language, which poets especially have practised in all ages, that is by applying received words to a new signification, and this, I believe, is meant by Horace, in that precept which is so variously construed by expositors

*Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum*³

And, in this way, he himself had a particular happiness, using all the tropes, and particular metaphors, with that grace which is observable in his *Odes*, where the beauty of expression is often greater than that of thought, as, in that one example, amongst an infinite number of others, *Et vultus nimium lubricus aspicit*⁴

And therefore, though he innovated little, he may justly be called a great refiner of the Roman tongue. This choice of words, and heightening of their natural signification, was observed in him by the writers of the following ages, for Petronius⁵ says of him, *et Horati curiosa felicitas*⁶. By this grafting, as I may call it, on old words, has our tongue been beautified by the three fore mentioned poets, Shakespeare, Fletcher⁷, and Jonson⁸ whose excellencies I can never enough admire, and in

¹ B.C. 239-169. Author of a large number of tragedies, and of the *Annales*, an epic poem in eighteen books, which was used by Virgil.

² 'Gather gold from the dung-hill.'

³ 'Your phrase will be distinguished if you can form a well-known expression to new account.'

⁴ 'And a countenance which gives no foothold to the gaze.'

⁵ Author of a satirical novel in the reign of Nero.

⁶ 'The laboured felicity of Horace.'

⁷ Beaumont (1584-1616) and Fletcher (1579-1625) were two of the best-known Jacobean dramatists. They worked in collaboration until the death of Beaumont. Their plays held the stage throughout the later half of the century, 'two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's' (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*).

⁸ 1573 (?) - 1637.

this they have been followed, especially by Sir John Suckling¹ and Mr Waller², who refined upon them. Neither have they, who succeeded them, been wanting in their endeavours to adorn our mother tongue: but it is not so lawful for me to praise my living contemporaries, as to admire my dead predecessors.

I should now speak of the refinement of Wit, but I have been so large on the former subject, that I am forced to contract myself in this. I will therefore only observe to you, that the wit of the last age was yet more incorrect than their language. Shakespeare, who many times has written better than any poet, in any language, is yet so far from writing wit always, or expressing that wit according to the dignity of the subject, that he writes, in many places, below the dullest writer of ours, or any precedent age. Never did any author precipitate himself from such height of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. He is the very Janus³ of poets, he wears almost everywhere two faces, and you have scarce begun to admire the one, ere you despise the other. Neither is the luxuriance of Fletcher (which his friends have taxed in him) a less fault than the carelessness of Shakespeare. He does not well always, and, when he does, he is a true Englishman, he knows not when to give over. If he wakes in one scene, he commonly slumbers in another, and, if he pleases you in the first three acts, he is frequently tired with his labour, that he goes heavily in the fourth, and sinks under his burden in the fifth.

For Ben Jonson, the most judicious of poets, he always writ properly, and as the character required, and I will not contest farther with my friends who call that wit: it being very certain, that even folly itself, well represented, is wit in a larger signification, and that there is fancy, as well as judgement, in it, though not so much

¹ 1609-42 One of the most noted of the Cavalier poets. Author of a number of lyrics, and of several dramas. *The Goblines* had some success on the stage, and Sheridan talked of reviving it. ² 1606-87

³ The door-keeper of the gods, and patron of the seasons. He was usually represented with two faces, because every door looks in two directions—but sometimes he was given four, representing the four seasons.

or noble because all poetry being imitation, that of folly is a lower exercise of fancy, though perhaps as difficult as the other, for 'tis a kind of looking downward in the poet, and representing that part of mankind which is below him

In these low characters of vice and folly, lay the excellency of that inimitable writer, who, when at any time he aimed at wit in the stricter sense, that is, sharpness of conceit, was forced either to borrow from the Ancients, as to my knowledge he did very much from Plautus¹, or, when he trusted himself alone, often fell into meanness of expression. Nay, he was not free from the lowest and most grovelling kind of wit, which we call clenches², of which *Every Man in his Humour*³ is infinitely full, and, which is worse, the wittiest persons in the drama speak them. His other comedies are not exempt from them. Will you give me leave to name some few? Asper⁴, in which character he personates himself (and he neither was nor thought himself a fool), exclaiming against the ignorant judges of the age, speaks thus

How monstrous and detested is't, to see
A fellow, that has neither art nor brain,
Sit like an *Aristarchus*, or *stark-ass*,
Taking men's lines, with a *tobacco face*,
In *snuff*, &c

And presently after *I mar'le whose wit 'twas to put a prologue in yond Sackbut's mouth. They might well think he would be out of tune, and yet you'd play upon him too — Will you have another of the same stamp? O, I cannot abide these limbs of sattin, or rather Satan*

But, it may be, you will object that this was Asper, Macilente, or Carlo Buffone⁵ you shall, therefore, hear him speak in his own person, and that in the two last lines, or sting of an epigram 'Tis inscribed to *Fine*

¹ B C 254(?)—184(?) The most famous comic dramatist of Rome

² Plays on words, puns

³ The best-known of Jonson's comedies

⁴ The chief character in the induction to *Every Man out of his Humour*

⁵ Characters in *Every Man out of his Humour*

Grand,¹ who, he says, was indebted to him for many things which he reckons there, and concludes thus

Forty things more, dear *Grand*, which you know true,
For which, or pay me quickly, or I'll pay you

This was then the mode of wit, the vice of the age, and not Ben Jonson's, for you see, a little before him, that admirable wit, Sir Philip Sidney, perpetually playing with his words. In his time, I believe, it ascended first into the pulpit, where (if you will give me leave to clench too) it yet finds the benefit of its clergy, for they are commonly the first corrupters of eloquence, and the last reformed from vicious oratory, as a famous Italian has observed before me, in his *Treatise of the Corruption of the Italian Tongue*², which he principally ascribes to priests and preaching friars

But, to conclude with what brevity I can, I will only add this, in defence of our present writers, that, if they reach not some excellencies of Ben Jonson (which no age, I am confident, ever shall), yet, at least, they are above that meanness of thought which I have taxed, and which is frequent in him

That the wit of this age is much more courtly, may easily be proved, by viewing the characters of gentlemen which were written in the last. First, for Jonson — Truewit, in the *Silent Woman*, was his masterpiece, and Truewit was a scholar-like kind of man, a gentleman with an alloy of pedantry, a man who seems mortified to the world, by much reading. The best of his discourse is drawn, not from the knowledge of the town, but books, and, in short, he would be a fine gentleman in an university. Shakespeare showed the best of his skill in his *Mercutio*³ and he said himself, that he was forced to kill him in the

¹ The name applied by Jonson (epigram 73) to an acquaintance whom he accuses of stealing his ideas

² Dryden's quotations are so often inaccurate that it is sometimes difficult to identify the works to which he refers. Mr W P Ker notes that the conceits of the clergy were censured in a work called *Il Canocchiale Aristotelico* (the Aristotelian Prospect-Glass), by D Emmanuele Tesauro, an edition of which appeared at Turin in 1670, two years before Dryden's 'Defence', and it is possible that he refers to this

³ In *Romeo and Juliet*

third act, to prevent being killed by him. But, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a person. I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless, that he might have lived to the end of the play, and died in his bed, without offence to any man.

Fletcher's Don John¹ is our only bugbear, and yet I may affirm, without suspicion of flattery, that he now speaks better, and that his character is maintained with much more vigour in the fourth and fifth acts, than it was by Fletcher in the three former. I have always acknowledged the wit of our predecessors, with all the veneration which becomes me, but, I am sure, their wit was not that of gentlemen, there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred and clownish in it, and which confessed the conversation of the authors.

And this leads me to the last and greatest advantage of our writing, which proceeds from *conversation*. In the age wherein those poets lived, there was less of gallantry than in ours, neither did they keep the best company of theirs. Their fortune has been much like that of Epicurus², in the retirement of his gardens, to live almost unknown, and to be celebrated after their decease. I cannot find that any of them had been conversant in courts, except Ben Jonson, and his genius lay not so much that way, as to make an improvement by it. Greatness was not then so easy of access, nor conversation so free, as now it is. I cannot, therefore, conceive it any insolence to affirm, that, by the knowledge and pattern of their wit who writ before us, and by the advantage of our own conversation, the discourse and raillery of our comedies excel what has been written by them. And this will be denied by none, but some few old fellows who value themselves on their acquaintance with the *Black Friars*³, who, because they saw their plays, would pretend a right to judge ours. The memory of these grave gentlemen is their only plea for being wits. They can tell a story of

¹ In *The Chances*

B C 342-270 A Greek philosopher who spent all the last years of his life in retirement

³ One of the best-known theatres in London in the early seventeenth century, at which several of Jonson's plays were produced

Ben Jonson, and, perhaps, have had fancy enough to give a supper in the *Apollon*,¹ that they might be called his sons, and, because they were drawn in to be laughed at in those times, they think themselves now sufficiently entitled to laugh at ours. Learning I never saw in any of them, and wit no more than they could remember. In short, they were unlucky to have been bred in an unpolished age, and more unlucky to live to a refined one. They have lasted beyond their own, and are cast behind ours, and, not contented to have known little at the age of twenty, they boast of their ignorance at threescore.

Now, if they ask me, whence it is that our conversation is so much refined? I must freely, and without flattery, ascribe it to the court, and, in it, particularly to the King², whose example gives a law to it. His own misfortunes, and the nation's, afforded him an opportunity, which is rarely allowed to sovereign princes, I mean of travelling, and being conversant in the most polished courts of Europe, and, thereby, of cultivating a spirit which was formed by nature to receive the impressions of a gallant and generous education. At his return, he found a nation lost as much in barbarism as in rebellion, and, as the excellency of his nature forgave the one, so the excellency of his manners reformed the other. The desire of imitating so great a pattern first awakened the dull and heavy spirits of the English from their natural reservedness, loosened them from their stiff forms of conversation, and made them easy and pliant to each other in discourse. Thus, insensibly, our way of living became more free, and the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force, by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gaiety of our neighbours. This being granted to be true, it would be a wonder if the poets, whose work is imitation, should be the only persons in three kingdoms who should not receive advantage by it, or, if they should not more easily imitate the wit and conversation of the present age than of the past.

¹ The name of Jonson's favourite club-room in the Devil tavern

² Charles II

Let us therefore admire the beauties and the heights of Shakespeare, without falling after him into a carelessness, and, as I may call it, a lethargy of thought, for whole scenes together. Let us imitate, as we are able, the quickness and easiness of Fletcher, without proposing him as a pattern to us, either in the redundancy of his matter, or the incorrectness of his language. Let us admire his wit and sharpness of conceit, but let us at the same time acknowledge, that it was seldom so fixed, and made proper to his character, as that the same things might not be spoken by any person in the play. Let us applaud his scenes of love, but let us confess, that he understood not either greatness or perfect honour in the parts of any of his women. In fine, let us allow, that he had so much fancy, as when he pleased he could write wit, but that he wanted so much judgement, as seldom to have written humour, or described a pleasant folly. Let us ascribe to Jonson, the height and accuracy of judgement in the ordering of his plots, his choice of characters, and maintaining what he had chosen to the end. But let us not think him a perfect pattern of imitation, except it be in humour, for love, which is the foundation of all comedies in other languages, is scarcely mentioned in any of his plays, and for humour itself, the poets of this age will be more wary than to imitate the meanness of his persons. Gentlemen will now be entertained with the follies of each other, and, though they allow Cobb and Tib¹ to speak properly, yet they are not much pleased with their tankard or with their rags. And surely their conversation can be no jest to them on the theatre, when they would avoid it in the street.

To conclude all, let us render to our predecessors what is their due, without confining ourselves to a servile imitation of all they writ, and, without assuming to ourselves the title of better poets, let us ascribe to the gallantry and civility of our age the advantage which we have above them, and to our knowledge of the customs and manner of it the happiness we have to please beyond them.

¹ A water-bearer and his wife, characters in *Every Man in His Humour*

ANNUS MIRABILIS

THE YEAR OF WONDERS, 1666

1

In thriving arts long time had Holland grown,
Crouching at home and cruel when abroad,
Scarce leaving us the means to claim our own,
Our King they courted and our merchants awed

2

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,
Stopped in their channels, found its freedom lost
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
And seemed but shipwrecked on so base a coast

3

For them alone the heavens had kindly heat,
In eastern quarries¹ ripening precious dew,
For them the Idumæan balm did sweat
And in hot Ceylon spicy forests grew

4

The sun but seemed the labourer of their year,
Each waxing moon² supplied her watery store
To swell those tides which from the Line did bear
Their brim-full vessels to the Belgian shore

5

Thus mighty in her ships stood Carthage long
And swept the riches of the world from far,
Yet stooped to Rome, less wealthy but more strong?
And thus may prove our second Punic war

¹ *In eastern quarries* Precious stones at first are dew condensed, and hardened by the warmth of the sun or subterranean fires (Dryden)

² A region of Palestine See Virgil, *Georg* iii 12

³ *Each waxing moon* According to their opinions who think that great heap of waters under the Line is depressed into tides by the moon towards the poles (Dryden)

6

What peace can be, where both to one pretend,
But they more diligent and we more strong ?
Or if a peace, it soon must have an end,
For they would grow too powerful, were it long

7

Behold two nations then engaged so far
That each seven years the fit must shake each land ,
Where France will side to weaken us by war
Who only can his vast designs withstand

8

See how he feeds the Iberian² with delays
To render us his timely friendship vain ,
And while his secret soul on Flanders preys,
He rocks the cradle of the babe of Sp in²

9

Such deep designs of empire does he lay
O'er them whose cause he seems to take in hand,
And prudently would make them lords at sea
To whom with ease he can give laws by land

10

This saw our King, and long within his breast
His pensive counsels balanced to and fro ,
He grieved the land he freed should be opprest
And he less for it than usurpers do

11

His generous mind the fair ideas drew
Of fame and honour, which in dangers lay ,
Where wealth, like fruit on precipices, grew,
Not to be gathered but by birds of prey

¹ *The Iberian* The Spaniard

² Charles II of Spain came to the throne in 1665, when only four years old

12

The loss and gain each fatally were great,
 And still his subjects called aloud for war
 But peaceful kings, o'er martial people set,
 Each other's poise and counterbalance are

13

He first surveyed the charge with careful eyes,
 Which none but mighty monarchs could maintain,
 Yet judged, like vapours that from imbecs rise,
 It would in richer showers descend again

14

At length resolved to assert the watery ball,
 He in himself did whole armados bring,
 Him aged seamen might their master call
 And choose for General, were he not their King

15

It seems as every ship their Sovereign knows,
 His awful summons they so soon obey,
 So hear the scaly herd when Proteus blows,¹
 And so to pasture follow through the sea

16

To see this fleet upon the ocean move
 Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies,
 And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,
 For tapers made two glaring comets rise,

¹ *When Proteus blows*, or—

'Caeruleus Proteus immania ponti
 Armenta, et magnas pascit sub gurgite phocas'—Virg (Dryden)

The quotation is inexact, see *Georg* iv 388 —
 'Caeruleus Proteus, magnum qui piscibus aequor
 Et juncto bipedum curru metitur equorum

Quippe ita Neptuno visum est, immania cujus
 Armenta et turpes pascit sub gurgite phocas'

17

Whether they unctuous exhalations are
Fired by the sun, or seeming so alone,
Or each some more remote and slippery star
Which loses footing when to mortals shown,

18

Or one that bright companion of the sun,
Whose glorious aspect sealed our new-born King,
And now, a round of greater years begun,
New influence from his walks of light did bring.

19

Victorious York¹ did first with famed success
To his known valour make the Dutch give place,
Thus Heaven our Monarch's fortune did confess,
Beginning conquest from his royal race

20

But since it was decreed, auspicious King
In Britan's right that thou shouldst wed the main,
Heaven as a gage would cast some precious thing,
And therefore doomed that Lawson² should be slain

21

Lawson amongst the foremost met his fate,
Whom sea-green Sirens from the rocks lament,
Thus, as an offering for the Grecian state,
He first was killed who first to battle went

22

Their chief³ blown up, in air, not waves expired
To which his pride presumed to give the law,
The Dutch confessed Heaven present and retired,
And all was Britain the wide ocean saw

¹ James, Duke of York, afterwards James II, was at this time Admiral of the fleet

² Sir John Lawson, Vice-Admiral of the Duke of York's division of the fleet. He was killed in 1665

³ The Admiral of Holland (Dryden)

23

To nearest ports their shattered ships repair,
Where by our dreadful cannon they lay awed ,
So reverently men quit the open air
Where thunder speaks the angry gods abroad

24

And now approached their fleet from India, fraught
With all the riches of the rising sun,
And precious sand from southern climates¹ brought,
The fatal regions where the war begun

25

Like hunted castors conscious of their store,
Their way laid wealth to Norway's coasts they bring ,
There first the North's cold bosom spices bore,
And winter brooded on the eastern spring

26

By the rich scent we found our perfumed prey,
Which, flanked with rocks, did close in covert lie ,
And round about their murdering cannon lay,
At once to threaten and invite the eye

27

Fiercer than cannon and than rocks more hard,
The English undertake the unequal war
Seven ships alone, by which the port is barred,
Besiege the Indies and all Denmark dare

28

These fight like husbands, but like lovers those ,
These fain would keep and those more fain enjoy ,
And to such height their frantic passion grows
That what both love both hazard to destroy

29

Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odours armed against them fly
Some precious by shattered porcelain fall
And some by aromatic splinters die

¹ *Southern climates* Guinea (Dryden)

30

And though by tempests of the prize bereft,
 In Heaven's inclemency some ease we find,
 Our foes we vanquished by our valour left,
 And only yielded to the seas and wind

31

Nor wholly lost we so deserved a prey,
 For storms repenting part of it restored,
 Which as a tribute from the Baltic sea
 The British ocean sent her mighty lord

32

Go, mortals, now and vex yourselves in vain
 For wealth, which so uncertainly must come,
 When what was brought so far and with such pain
 Was only kept to lose it nearer home

33

The son who, twice three months on the ocean tost,
 Prepared to tell what he had passed before,
 Now sees in English ships the Holland coast
 And parents' arms in vain stretched from the shore

34

This careful husband had been long away
 Whom his chaste wife and little children mourn,
 Who on their fingers learned to tell the day
 On which their father promised to return

35

Such are the proud designs of human kind,¹
 And so we suffer shipwreck everywhere '
 Alas, what port can such a pilot find
 Who in the night of Fate must blindly steer '

36

The undistinguished seeds of good and ill
 Heaven in his bosom from our knowledge hides,
 And draws them in contempt of human skill,
 Which oft for friends mistaken foes provides

¹ *Such are, &c* From Petronius 'Si bene calculum ponas, ubique fit naufragium' (Dryden) [*Satyr* c 115]

37

Let Munster's prelate¹ ever be accurst,
In whom we seek the German faith² in vain,
Alas, that he should teach the English first
That fraud and avarice in the Church could reign !

38

Happy who never trust a stranger's will
Whose friendship's in his interest understood,
Since money given but tempts him to be ill,
When power is too remote to make him good

39

Till now, alone the mighty nations strove,
The rest at gaze without the lists did stand
And threatening France, placed like a painted Jove,
Kept idle thunder in his lifted hand

40

That eunuch guardian of rich Holland's trade
Who envies us what he wants power to enjoy,
Whose noiseful valour does no foe invade
And weak assistance will his friends destroy,

41

Offended that we fought without his leave,
He takes this time his secret hate to show,
Which Charles does with a mind so calm receive
As one that neither seeks nor shuns his foe

42

With France to aid the Dutch the Danes unite,
| France as their tyrant, Denmark as their slave,
But when with one three nations join to fight,
They silently confess that one more brave

¹ The Bishop of Munster had at first assisted the English, but afterwards drew back, and made a private treaty of peace with the Dutch (1666)

² *The German faith* Tacitus saith of them 'Nullos mortalium armis aut fide ante Germanos esse' (Dryden) [Said of the Germans, according to Tacitus, by two Germa *Ann* xiii 54]

43

Lewis had chased the English from his shore,
But Charles the French as subjects does invite,
Would Heaven for each some Solomon restore,
Who by their mercy may decide their right¹

44

Were subjects so but only by their choice
And not from birth did forced dominion take,
Our Prince alone would have the public voice
And all his neighbours' realms would deserts make

45

He without fear a dangerous war pursues,
Which without rashness he began before
As honour made him first the danger choose,
So still he makes it good on virtue's score

46

The doubled charge his subjects' love supplies,
Who in that bounty to themselves are kind
So glad Egyptians see their Nilus rise
And in his plenty their abundance find

47

With equal power he does two chiefs create,¹
Two such as each seemed worthiest when alone,
Each able to sustain a nation's fate,
Since both had found a greater in their own

48

Both great in courage, conduct, and in fame,
Yet neither envious of the other's praise,
Then duty, faith, and interest too the same,
Like mighty partners, equally they raise

¹ Rupert, Prince of Bavaria, nephew of Charles I. One of the most famous generals of his day, noted for his reckless daring. He supported his uncle's cause during the Civil War, and in 1664 Charles II made him Admiral of the Guinea Fleet. He won, with Monk's aid, a great victory over the Dutch in 1665, but was defeated by them in 1666.

George Monk, Duke of Albemarle, the most trusted and successful of Cromwell's generals. After the Restoration he served Charles as faithfully as he had served Oliver.

49

The Prince long time had courted Fortune's love,
But once possessed did absolutely reign
Thus with their Amazons the heroes strove,
And conquered first those beauties they would gain

50

The Duke beheld, like Scipio, with disdain
That Carthage which he ruined rise once more,¹
And shook aloft the fasces² of the main
To fright those slaves with what they felt before

51

Together to the watery camp they haste,
Whom matrons passing to their children show,
Infants' first vows for them to Heaven are cast,
And future people bless them as they go³

52

With them no riotous pomp nor Asian train
To infect a navy with their gaudy fears,
To make slow fights and victories but vain,
But war severely like itself appears

53

Diffusive of themselves, where'er they pass,
They make that warmth in others they expect,
Their valour works like bodies on a glass
And does its image on their men project

54

Our fleet divides, and straight the Dutch appear,
In number and a famed commander bold
The narrow seas can scarce their navy bear
Or crowded vessels can their soldiers hold

¹ Scipio Africanus the Younger captured and burned Carthage after a siege of two years (B C 146)

² An emblem consisting of a bundle of rods and an axe, carried before the chief magistrate at Rome

³ *Future people* 'Examina infantum futurisque populus'—Plin Jun in *Pan ad Traj* (Dryden) [c 26]

55

The Duke, less numerous, but in courage more,
On wings of all the winds to combat flies,
His murdering guns a loud defiance roar
And bloody crosses on his flag-staffs rise

56

Both furl their sails and strip them for the fight,
Their folded sheets dismiss the useless air,
The Elean plans¹ could boast no nobler sight,
When struggling champions did their bodies bare

57

Borne each by other in a distant line,
The sea-built forts in dreadful order movè,
So vast the noise, as if not fleets did join,
But lands unfixed and floating nations strove²

58

Now passed, on either side they numbly tack,
Both strive to intercept and guide the wind
And in its eye more closely they come back
To finish all the deaths they left behind

59

On high-raised decks the haughty Belgians ride,
Beneath whose shade our humble frigates go,
Such port the elephant bears, and so defied
By the rhinoceros, her unequal foe

60

And as the build, so different is the fight,
Their mounting shot is on our sails designed
Deep in their hulls our deadly bullets light
And through the yielding planks a passage find

¹ *The Elean, &c* Where the Olympic games were celebrated (Dryden)

² From Virgil 'Credas innare revulsas Cycladas,' &c (Dryden)
[*Aen* viii 691]

61

Our dreaded Admiral from far they threat,
Whose battered rigging their whole war receives ,
All bare, like some old oak which tempests beat,
He stands, and sees below his scattered leaves

62

Heroes of old when wounded shelter sought ,
But he, who meets all danger with disdain,
Even in their face his ship to anchor brought
And steeple-high stood propped upon the main

63

At this excess of courage all-amazed,
The foremost of his foes a while withdraw ,
With such respect in entered Rome they gazed
Who on high chairs the god-like fathers saw

64

And now as, where Patroclus' body lay,
Here Trojan chiefs advanced and there the Greek,¹
Ours o'er the Duke their pious wings display
And theirs the noblest spoils of Britain seek

65

Meantime his busy mariners he hastes
His shattered sails with rigging to restore ,
And willing pines ascend his broken masts,
Whose lofty heads rise higher than before

66

Straight to the Dutch he turns his dreadful prow,
More fierce the important quarrel to decide
Like swans in long array his vessels show,
Whose crests advancing do the waves divide

¹ Patroclus, the friend of Achilles, was killed outside the walls of Troy. There was a great contest between the Greeks and the Trojans for the possession of his body.

67

They charge, recharge, and all along the sea
 They drive and squander the huge Belgian fleet,
 Berkeley¹ alone, who nearest danger lay,
 Did a like fate with lost Creusa² meet

68

The night comes on, we eager to pursue
 The combat still and they ashamed to leave
 Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew
 And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive

69

In the English fleet each ship resounds with joy
 And loud applause of their great leader's fame,
 In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,
 And slumbering smile at the imagined flame

70

Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,
 Stretched on their decks like weary oxen lie,
 Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,
 Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply

71

In dreams they fearful precipices tread,
 Or shipwrecked labour to some distant shore,
 Or in dark churches walk among the dead,
 They wake with horror and dare sleep no more

72

The morn they look on with unwilling eyes,
 Till from their maintop joyful news they hear
 Of ships which by their mould bring new supplies
 And in their colours Belgian lions bear

¹ Vice-Admiral Sir William Berkeley refused quarter and continued fighting long after defeat was certain. He was shot at last, and died without having surrendered.

Wife of Aeneas, lost in the sack of Troy (Virg. *Aen.* ii 738)

73

Our watchful General had discerned from far
This mighty succour, which made glad the foe,
He sighed, but, like a father of the war,
His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow¹

74

His wounded men he first sends off to shore,
Never till now unwilling to obey
They not their wounds but want of strength deplore
And think them happy who with him can stay

75

Then to the rest, 'Rejoice,' said he, 'to-day'
In you the fortune of Great Britain lies,
Among so brave a people you are they
Whom Heaven has chose to fight for such a prize

76

'If number English courages could quell,
We should at first have shunned, not met our foes,
Whose numerous sails the fearful only tell,
Courage from hearts and not from numbers grows'

77

He said, nor needed more to say with haste
To their known stations cheerfully they go,
And all at once, disdaining to be last,
Solicit every gale to meet the foe

78

Nor did the encouraged Belgians long delay,
But bold in others, not themselves, they stood
So thick, our navy scarce could sheer their way,
But seemed to wander in a moving wood

79

Our little fleet was now engaged so far
That like the sword-fish in the whale they fought,
The combat only seemed a civil war,
Till through their bowels we our passage wrought

¹ 'Spem vultu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem'

Virg (Dryden) [Aen. i. 209]

80

Never had valour, no, not ours before
 Done aught like this upon the land or main,
 Where not to be overcome was to do more
 Than all the conquests former Kings did gain

81

The mighty ghosts of our great Harrys rose,
 And armed Edwards looked with anxious eyes,
 To see this fleet among unequal foes,
 By which Fate promised them their Charles should rise

82

Meantime the Belgians tack upon our rear,
 And raking chase guns through our sterns they send,
 Close by, their fire-ships like jackals appear
 Who on their lions for the prey attend

83

Silent in smoke of cannon they come on,
 Such vapours once did fiery Cacus hide ¹
 In these the height of pleased revenge is shown
 Who burn contented by another's side

84

Sometimes from fighting squadrons of each fleet
 Deceived themselves or to preserve some friend,
 Two grappling Aetnas on the ocean meet
 And English fires with Belgian flames contend

85

Now at each tack our little fleet grows less,
 And, like maimed fowl, swim lagging on the main,
 Their greater loss their numbers scarce confess,
 While they lose cheaper than the English gain

86

Have you not seen when, whistled from the fist,
 Some falcon stoops at what her eye designed,
 And, with her eagerness the quarry missed,
 Straight flies at check and clips it down the wind, ²

¹ 'Ille autem' (Dryden) [Virg *Aen* viii 251 Cacus, son of Vulcan, when pursued by Hercules, whose cattle he had stolen, vomited forth smoke, to conceal himself]

² 'To fly at check' is to fly wildly at base game 'To clip it' is to fly fast

87

The dastard crow, that to the wood made wing
And sees the groves no shelter can afford,
With her loud caws her craven kind does bring,
Who, safe in numbers, cuff the noble bird

88

Among the Dutch thus Albemarle did fare
He could not conquer and disdained to fly
Past hope of safety, 'twas his latest care,
Like falling Caesar, decently to die

89

Yet pity did his manly spirit move,
To see those perish who so well had fought,
And generously with his despair he strove,
Resolved to live till he their safety wrought

90

Let other muses write his prosperous fate,
Of conquered nations tell and kings restored,
But mine shall sing of his eclipsed estate,
Which, like the sun's, more wonders does afford

91

He drew his mighty frigates all before,
On which the foe his fruitless force employs,
His weak ones deep into his rear he bore
Remote from guns, as sick men from the noise

92

His fiery cannon did their passage guide
And following smoke obscured them from the foe,
Thus Israel safe from the Egyptian's pride
By flaming pillars and by clouds did go

93

Elsewhere the Belgian force we did defeat,
But here our courages did theirs subdue,
So Xenophon once led that famed retreat
Which first the Asian empire overthrew¹

¹ Xenophon's retreat with the Greek army after the battle of Cunaxa narrated in his *Anabasis*

94

The foe approached, and one for his bold sin
 Was sunk, as he that touched the Ark was slain ¹
 The wild waves mastered him and sucked him in,
 And smiling eddies dimpled on the main

95

This seen, the rest at awful distance stood
 As if they had been there as servants set
 To stay or to go on, as he thought good,
 And not pursue, but wait on his retreat

96

So Libyan huntsmen on some sandy plain,
 From shady coverts roused, the lion chase
 The kingly beast roars out with loud disdain,
 And slowly moves, unknowing to give place ²

97

But if some one approach to dare his force,
 He swings his tail and swiftly turns him round,
 With one paw seizes on his trembling horse,
 And with the other tears him to the ground

98

Amidst these toils succeeds the balmy night,
 Now hissing waters the quenched guns restore
 And weary waves,³ withdrawing from the fight,
 Lie lulled and panting on the silent shore

99

The moon shone clear on the becalmed flood,
 Where, while her beams like glittering silver play,
 Upon the deck our careful General stood,
 And deeply mused on the succeeding day ⁴

¹ 1 Chion xiii 7-10

² The simile is Virgil's 'Vestigia retro impropinata refert' (Dryden)
 [Aen ix 797]

³ *Weary waves*, from Statius

Nec trucibus fluvius idem sonus occidit horror
 Aequoris, et terris mania acchnata quiescunt'

(Dryden) [Sylv v 4, 5]

⁴ The 3rd of June, famous for two former victories (Dryden)

100

'That happy sun,' said he, 'will rise again,
Who twice victorious did our navy see
And I alone must view him rise in vain,
Without one ray of all his star for me

101

'Yet like an English general will I die,
And all the ocean make my spacious grave
Women and cowards on the land may lie,
The sea's a tomb that's proper for the brave'

102

Restless he passed the remnants of the night,
Till the fresh air proclaimed the morning nigh,
And burning ships, the martyrs of the fight,
With paler fires beheld the eastern sky

103

But now, his stores of ammunition spent,
His naked valour is his only guard,
Rare thunders are from his dumb cannon sent
And solitary guns are scarcely heard

104

Thus far had Fortune power, here forced to stay,
Nor longer durst with virtue be at strife,
Thus as a ransom Albemarle did pay
For all the glories of so great a life

105

For now brave Rupert from afar appears,
Whose waving streamers the glad General knows,
With full-spread sails his eager navy steers,
And every ship in swift proportion grows

106

The anxious Prince had heard the cannon long
And from that length of time dire omens drew
Of English overmatched, and Dutch too strong
Who never fought three days but to pursue

107

Then, as an eagle, who with pious care
Was beating widely on the wing for prey,
To her now silent eyry does repair,
And finds her callow infants forced away ,

108

Stung with her love, she stoops upon the plain
The broken air loud whistling as she flies
She stops and listens and shoots forth again
And guides her pinions by her young ones' cries

109

With such kind passion hastes the Prince to fight
And spreads his flying canvas to the sound ,
Him whom no danger, were he there, could fright,
Now absent, every little noise can wound

110

As in a drought the thirsty creatures cry
And gape upon the gathered clouds for rain,
And first the martlet meets it in the sky,
And with wet wings joys all the feathered train ,

111

With such glad hearts did our despairing men
Salute the appearance of the Prince's fleet,
And each ambitiously would claim the ken
That with first eyes did distant safety meet

112

The Dutch, who came like greedy hinds before
To reap the harvest their ripe ears did yield,
Now look like those, when rolling thunders roar
And sheets of lightning blast the standing field

113

Full in the Prince's passage, hills of sand
And dangerous flats in secret ambush lay,
Where the false tides skim o'er the covered land
And seamen with dissembled depths betray

114

The wily Dutch, who, like fallen angels, feared
This new Messiah's coming, there did wait,
And round the verge their braving vessels steered
To tempt his courage with so fair a bait

115

But he unmoved contemns their idle threat,
Secure of fame whene'er he please to fight,
His cold experience tempers all his heat,
And inbred worth does boasting valour slight

116

Heroic virtue did his actions guide,
And he the substance, not the appearance, chose
To rescue one such friend he took more pride
Than to destroy whole thousands of such foes

117

But when approached, in strict embraces bound
Rupert and Albemarle together grow,
He joys to have his friend in safety found,
Which he to none but to that friend would owe

118

The cheerful soldiers, with new stores supplied,
Now long to execute their spleenful will,
And in revenge for those three days they tried
Wish one like Joshua's, when the sun stood still¹

119

Thus reinforced, against the adverse fleet,
Still doubling ours, brave Rupert leads the way,
With the first blushes of the morn they meet
And bring night back upon the new born day

120

His presence soon blows up the kindling fight,
And his loud guns speak thick like angry men,
It seemed as slaughter had been breathed all night
And Death new pointed his dull dart again

¹ Joshua x 13

121

The Dutch too well his mighty conduct know
 And matchless courage, since the former fight,
 Whose navy like a stiff stretched cord did show,
 Till he bore in and bent them into flight

122

The wind he shares, while half their fleet offend
 His open side and high above him shows,
 Upon the rest at pleasure he descends
 And doubly harmed he double harms bestows

123

Behind, the General mends his weary pace
 And sullenly to his revenge he sails,
 So glides¹ some trodden serpent on the grass
 And long behind his wounded volume trails

124

The increasing sound is borne to either shore
 And for their stakes the throwing nations fear,
 Their passion double with the cannons' roar,
 And with warm wishes each man combats there

125

Pled thick and close as when the fight begun,
 Their huge unwieldy navy wastes away
 So sicken waning moons too near the sun
 And blunt their crescents on the edge of day

126

And now, reduced on equal terms to fight,
 Their ships like wasted patrimonies show,
 Where the thin scattering trees admit the light
 And shun each other's shadows as they grow

¹ *So glides*, &c From Virgil

'Quum medii nexus extremaeque agmina caudae

Solvuntur, tardosque trahit sinus ultimus orbes,' &c

(Dryden) [*Georg* III 423]

127

The warlike Prince had severed from the rest
Two giant ships, the pride of all the main
Which with his one so vigorously he pressed
And flew so home they could not rise again

128

Already battered by his lee they lay,
In van upon the passing winds they call,
The passing winds through their torn canvas play
And flagging sails on heartless sailors fall

129

Their opened sides receive a gloomy light,
Dreadful as day let in to shades below,
Without, grim Death rides barefaced in their sight
And urges entering billows as they flow

130

When one dire shot, the last they could supply,
Close by the board the Prince's main-mast bore
All three now helpless by each other lie,
And this offends not and those fear no more

131

So have I seen some fearful hare maintain
A course, till tired before the dog she lay,
Who, stretched behind her, pants upon the plain,
Past power to kill as she to get away

132

With his lolled tongue he faintly licks his prey,
His warm breath blows her flix¹ up as she lies,
She, trembling, creeps upon the ground away
And looks back to him with beseeching eyes

133

The Prince unjustly does his stars accuse,
Which hindered him to push his fortune on,
For what they to his courage did refuse
By mortal valour never must be done

¹ Soft fu

134

This lucky hour the wise Batavian takes
 And warns his tattered fleet to follow home,
 Proud to have so got off with equal stakes,
 Where 'twas a triumph not to be o'ercome¹

135

The General's force, as kept alive by fight,
 Now, not opposed, no longer can pursue,
 Lasting till Heaven had done its courage right
 When he had conquered he his weakness knew

136

He casts a frown on the departing foe
 And sighs to see him quit the watery field,
 His stern fixed eyes no satisfaction show
 For all the glories which the fight did yield

137

Though, as when fiends did miracles avow,
 He stands confessed even by the boastful Dutch,
 He only does his conquest disavow
 And thinks too little what they found too much

138

Returned, he with the fleet resolved to stay,
 No tender thoughts of home his heart divide,
 Domestic joys and cares he puts away,
 For realms are households which the great must guide

139

As those who unripe veins in mines explore
 On the rich bed again the warm turf lay,
 Till time digests the yet imperfect ore,
 And know it will be gold another day,

¹ From Horace

¹ Quos opimus
 Fallere et effugere est triumphus
 (Dryden) [Od iv 4 51]

140

So looks our Monarch on this early fight,
 The essay and rudiments of great success,
 Which all-maturing time must bring to light,
 While he, like Heaven, does each day's labour bless.

141

Heaven ended not the first or second day,
 Yet each was perfect to the work designed
 God and kings work, when they their work survey,
 And passive aptness in all subjects find

142

In burdened vessels first with speedy care
 His plenteous stores do seasoned timber send,
 Thither the brawny carpenters repair
 And as the surgeons of maimed ships attend

143

With cord and canvas from rich Hamburg sent
 His navy's moulted wings he imps¹ once more,
 Tall Norway fir their masts in battle spent,
 And English oak sprung leaks and planks restore

144

All hands employed, the royal work grows warm,²
 Like labouring bees on a long summer's day,
 Some sound the trumpet for the rest to swarm
 And some on bells of tasted lilies play,

145

With gluey wax some new foundation lay
 Of virgin-combs, which from the roof are hung,
 Some armed within doors upon duty stay
 Or tend the sick or educate the young

¹ To 'imp' is a term in falconry, and means to mend by grating on new pieces of feather Cf *Richard II*, Act II Sc 1 Northumberland says that the rebels will

'Imp out our drooping country's broken wing

² 'Fervet opus' the same similitude in Virgil (Dryden) [*Georg*
 17 159]

146

So here some pick out bullets from the side,
Some drive old oakum¹ through each seam and rift
Their left hand does the caulking-iron² guide,
The rattling mallet with the right they lift

147

With boiling pitch another near at hand,
From friendly Sweden brought, the seams instops,
Which well paid o'er the salt sea waves withstand
And shake them from the rising beak in drops

148

Some the galled ropes with dauby marling³ bind
Or sear-cloth⁴ masts with strong tarpauling coats
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind
And one below their ease or stiffness notes

149

Our careful Monarch stands in person by
His new-cast cannons' firmness to explore,
The strength of big-corned powder loves to try
And ball and cartridge sorts for every bore

150

Each day brings fresh supplies of arms and men
And ships which all last winter were abroad,
And such as fitted since the fight had been
Or new from stocks were fallen into road

¹ 'Cords untwisted and reduced to hemp, with which, mingled with pitch, leaks are stopped' (*Johnson's Dictionary*)

² 'An instrument resembling a chisel used for driving the oakum into the seams of ships' (*Murray's Dictionary*)

³ A small line covered with tar, which is wound round large ropes to prevent their being chafed

⁴ More often spelled cere-cloth Cloth prepared with wax, often used to preserve dead bodies Here used as a verb

151

The goodly *London* in her gallant trim,
The phoenix-daughter of the vanished old,¹
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim
And on her shadow rides in floating gold

152

Her flag aloft, spread ruffling to the wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood to fire,
The weaver, charmed with what his loom designed,
Goes on to sea and knows not to retire

153

With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,
Deep in her draught and warlike in her length,
She seems a sea wasp flying on the waves

154

This martial present, piously designed,
The loyal City give their best-loved King
And, with a bounty ample as the wind,
BUILT, fitted, and maintained, to him did bring

155

By viewing nature Nature's handmaid Art,
Makes mighty things from small beginnings grow
Thus fishes first to shipping did impart
Their tail the rudder and their head the prow

156

Some log perhaps upon the waters swam,
A useless drift, which, rudely cut within
And hollowed, first a floating trough became
And cross some rivulet passage did begin

¹ The old ship the *London* had been burned, and the city now presented the king with a new vessel, the *Loyal London*

157

In shipping such as this the Irish kern¹
And untaught Indian on the stream did glide,
Ere sharp-keeled boats to stem the flood did lean,
O! fin-like oars did spread from either side

158

Add but a sail, and Saturn so appeared,
When from lost empire he to exile went,
And with the golden age to Tiber steered,
Where coin and first commence he did invent

159

Rude as their ships was navigation then,
No useful compass or meridian known,
Coasting, they kept the land within their ken,
And knew no North but when the pole star shone

160

Of all who since have used the open sea
Than the bold English none more fame have won,
Beyond the year and out of Heaven's high way²
They make discoveries where they see no sun

161

But what so long in vain, and yet unknown,
By poor mankind's benighted wit is sought,
Shall in this age to Britain first be shown
And hence be to admiring nations taught

162

The ebbs of tides and their mysterious flow
We, as art's elements, shall understand,
And as by line upon the ocean go
Whose paths shall be familiar as the land

¹ Irish peasant Also used of light soldiery

² 'Extra anni solisque vias'—Virg (Dryden) [*Aen* vi 797]

163

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,¹
By which remotest regions are allied,
Which makes one city of the universe,
Where some may gain and all may be supplied

164

Then we upon our globe's last verge shall go
And view the ocean leaning on the sky
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know
And on the lunar world securely pry

165

This I foretell, from your auspicious care
Who great in search of God and Nature grow,
Who best your wise Creator's praise declare,
Since best to praise His works is best to know

166

O, truly Royal ! who behold the law
And rule of beings in your Maker's mund,
And thence, like limbecs, rich ideas draw
To fit the levelled use of human kind

167

But first the toils of war we must endure
And from the injurious Dutch redeem the seas,
War makes the valiant of his right secure
And gives up fraud to be chastised with ease

168

Already were the Belgians on our coast,
Whose fleet more mighty every day became
By late success, which they did falsely boast,
And now by first appearing seemed to claim

169

Designing, subtle, diligent, and close,
They knew to manage war with wise delay
Yet all those arts their vanity did cross
And by their pride their prudence did betray

¹ By a more exact knowledge of longitude (Dryden)

170

Nor stayed the English long, but, well supplied,
 Appear as numerous as the insulting foe,
 The combat now by courage must be tried
 And the success the braver nation show

171

There was the Plymouth squadron new come in,
 Which in the Straits last winter was abroad,
 Which twice on Biscay's working bay had been
 And on the midland sea the French had awed

172

Old expert Allen,¹ loyal all along,
 Famed for his action on the Smyrna fleet,
 And Holmes,² whose name shall live in epic song,
 While music numbers, or while verse has feet,

173

Holmes, the Achates³ of the general's fight,
 Who first bewitched our eyes with Guinea gold,
 As once old Cato in the Romans' sight
 The tempting fruits of Afric did unfold⁴

174

With him went Spragge,⁵ as bountiful as brave,
 Whom his high courage to command had brought,
 Harman,⁶ who did the twice fired *Harry* save
 And in his burning ship undaunted fought

¹ Sir Thomas Allen, Vice-Admiral of the White, who with seven ships routed a Dutch merchant squadron on its way home from Smyrna with its convoy—about forty vessels in all—at the beginning of the war

² Sir Robert Holmes, Rear Admiral of the White, who had an engagement with the Dutch off the coast of Africa, before the war began

³ Achates was the intimate friend of Aeneas and took part in the expedition against Italy. See Virg *Aen* i 120, &c

⁴ Cato the Censor, when urging the Romans to enter upon the third Punic war, drew out some figs from under his robe, saying that they had been gathered in Carthage only three days before, so near was the enemy to Rome

⁵ Sir Edmund Spragge had been knighted by Charles II for his bravery in action

⁶ Sir John Harman, captain of the *Henry*. His ship was disabled,

175

Young Hollis,¹ on a Muse by Mars begot,
Born, Caesar-like, to write and act great deeds,
Impatient to revenge his fatal shot,
His right hand doubly to his left succeeds

176

Thousands were there in darker fame that dwell,
Whose deeds some nobler poem shall adorn,
And though to me unknown, they sure fought well
Whom Rupert led and who were British born

177

Of every size a hundred fighting sail,
So vast the navy now at anchor rides
That underneath it the pressed waters fail
And with its weight it shoulders off the tides

178

Now, anchors weighed, the seamen shout so shrill
That heaven and earth and the wide ocean rings
A breeze from westward waits their sails to fill
And rests in those high beds his downy wings

179

The wary Dutch this gathering storm foresaw
And durst not bide it on the English coast,
Behind their treacherous shallows they withdraw
And there lay snares to catch the British host

180

So the false spider, when her nets are spread,
Deep ambushed in her silent den does lie,
And feels far off the trembling of her thread,
Whose filmy cord should bind the struggling fly,

^c
but he refused quarter Three fire-ships were sent against the *Henry*
She disengaged herself from two, and sank the third Finally Harman
brought her into Harwich, badly injured but untaken

¹ Captain, afterwards Sir Frescheville Hollis, whose father, Gervase
Hollis, was known as an antiquary He lost an arm in battle in 1665,
and was killed fighting against the Dutch in 1672

181

Then, if at last she find him fast beset,
She issues forth and runs along her loom
She joys to touch the captive in her net
And drags the little wretch in triumph home

182

The Belgians hoped that with disordered haste
Our deep-cut keels upon the sands might run,
Or, if with caution leisurely were past,
Their numerous gross might charge us one by one

183

But, with a fore-wind pushing them above
And swelling tide that heaved them from below,
O'er the blind flats our warlike squadrons move
And with spread sails to welcome battle go

184

It seemed as there the British Neptune stood,
With all his host of waters at command,
Beneath them to submit the officious flood,
And with his trident shoved them off the sand¹

185

To the pale foes they suddenly draw near
And summon them to unexpected fight
They start, like murderers when ghosts appear
And draw their curtains in the dead of night

186

Now van to van the foremost squadrons meet,
The midmost battles hasting up behind,
Who view far off the storm of falling sleet
And hear their thunder rattling in the wind

187

At length the adverse Admirals appear,
The two bold champions of each country's right,
Their eyes describe the lists as they come near
And draw the lines of death before they fight

¹ 'Levat ipse trident et vastas aperit syrtes,' &c
Virg (Dryden) [*Aen* 1 145]

188

The distance judged for shot of every size,
The Instocks¹ touch, the ponderous ball expires
The vigorous seaman every porthole plies
And adds his heart to every gun he fires

189

Fierce was the fight on the proud Belgians' side
For honour, which they seldom sought before,
But now they by their own vain boasts were tied
And forced at least in show to prize it more

190

But sharp remembrance on the English part
And shame of being matched by such a foe
Rouse conscious virtue up in every heart,
And seeming to be stronger makes them so²

191

Nor long the Belgians could that fleet sustain
Which did two Generals' fates and Caesar's bear,
Each several ship a victory did gain,
As Rupert or as Albemarle were there

192

Their battered Admiral too soon withdrew,
Unthanked by ours for his unfinished fight,
But he the minds of his Dutch masters knew
Who called that providence which we called flight

193

Never did men more joyfully obey
Or sooner understood the sign to fly,
With such alacrity they bore away
As if to praise them all the States stood by

¹ A pointed stick with a fork at the end in which a lighted match was fastened. Used by gunners in firing cannon

² 'Possunt quia posse videntur'—Verg. (Dryden) [*Aen* v 231]

194

O famous leader of the Belgian fleet '
 Thy monument inscribed such praise shall wear
 As Varro,¹ timely flying, once did meet,
 Because he did not of his Rome despair

195

Behold that navy, which a while before
 Provoked the tardy English close to fight,
 Now draw their beaten vessels close to shore,
 As larks he dared² to shun the hobby's³ flight

196

Whoe'er would English monuments survey
 In other records may our courage know,
 But let them hide the story of this day,
 Whose fame was blemished by too base a foe

197

O! if too busily they will inquire
 Into a victory which we disdain,
 Then let them know the Belgians did retire
 Before the patron saint⁴ of injured Spain

198

Repenting England, this revengeful day,
 To Philip's manes⁵ did an offering bring,
 England, which first by leading them astray
 Hatched up rebellion to destroy her King

199

Our fathers bent their baneful industry
 To check a monarchy that slowly grew,
 But did not France or Holland's fate foresee,
 Whose rising power to swift dominion flew

¹ Terentius Varro, who commanded the Romans at Cannae (B.C. 216), was thanked by the Senate because he boldly undertook the battle and did not 'despair for the State' Frightened

² A kind of falcon, formerly flown at larks and other small birds

⁴ *Patron saint*, St James, on whose day this victory was gained (Dryden)

⁵ *Philip's manes*, Philip II of Spain, against whom the Hollanders rebelling were aided by Queen Elizabeth (Dryden) Cf. p 162, note 3

200

In Fortune's empire blindly thus we go
And wander after pathless destiny,
Whose dark resorts since prudence cannot know,
In vain it would provide for what shall be

201

But whate'er English to the blessed shall go,
And the fourth Harry or first Orange meet,¹
Find him disowning of a Bourbon foe
And him detesting a Batavian fleet

202

Now on their coasts our conquering navy rides,
Waylays their merchants and their land besets,
Each day new wealth without their care provides,
They lie asleep with prizes in their nets

203

So close behind some promontory lie
The huge leviathans to attend their prey,
And give no chase, but swallow in the fry,
Which through their gaping jaws mistake the way

204

Nor was this all, in ports and roads remote
Destructive fires among whole fleets we send,
Triumphant flames upon the water float
And out bound ships at home their voyage end

205

Those various squadrons, variously designed,
Each vessel freighted with a several load,
Each squadron waiting for a several wind,
All find but one, to burn them in the road

¹ Henry IV of France, and William, the first Prince of Orange, are represented as lamenting rebellion. Henry disowns hostility to Henry III, the Bourbon against whom he had fought. William detests the Dutch navy, by whose means Dutch independence had been established.

206

Some bound for Guinea golden sand to find
Bore all the gauds the simple natives wear,
Some for the pride of Turkish courts designed
For folded turbans finest holland bear,

207

Some English wool, vexed in a Belgian loom
And into cloth of spongy softness made,
Did into France or colder Denmark doom,
To ruin with worse ware our staple trade

208

Our greedy seamen rummage every hold,
Smile on the booty of each wealthier chest,
And, as the priests who with their gods make bold,
Take what they like and sacrifice the rest

209

But, ah ! how unsincere are all our joys,
Which sent from Heaven, like lightning, make no stay
Their palling taste the journey's length destroys,
Or grief sent post o'ertakes them on the way

210

Swelled with our late successes on the foe,
Which France and Holland wanted power to cross,
We urge an unseen fate to lay us low
And feed their envious eyes with English loss

211

Each element His dread command obeys
Who makes or runs with a smile or frown,
Who as by one He did our nation raise,
So now He with another pulls us down

212

Yet, London, empress of the northern clime,
By an high fate thou greatly didst expire,
Great as the world's, which at the death of time
Must fall and rise a nobler frame by fire¹

¹ 'Quum mare, quum tellus, correptaque regna coeli aideat,' &c
(Dryden.) See Ovid, *Met* 1 256 —

213

As when some dire usurper Heaven provides
To scourge his country with a lawless sway ,
His birth perhaps some petty village hides
And sets his cradle out of Fortune's way ,

214

Till, fully ripe, his swelling fate breaks out
And hurries him to mighty mischiefs on ,
His Prince, surprised, at first no ill could doubt,
And wants the power to meet it when 'tis known.

215

Such was the rise of this prodigious fire,
Which, in mean buildings first obscurely bred,
From thence did soon to open streets aspire
And straight to palaces and temples spread

216

The diligence of trades, and noiseful gain,
And luxury, more late, asleep were laid ,
All was the Night's, and in her silent reign
No sound the rest of Nature did invade

217

In this deep quiet, from what source unknown,
Those seeds of fire their fatal birth disclose ,
And first few scattering sparks about were blown,
Big with the flames that to our ruin rose

218

Then in some close-pent room it crept along
And, smouldering as it went, in silence fed ,
Till the infant monster, with devouring strong
Walked boldly upright with exalted head

'Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, affore tempus,
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia coeli
Ardeat, et mundi moles operosa laboret'

219

Now, like some rich or mighty murderer,
 Too great for prison which he breaks with gold,
 Who fresher for new mischiefs does appear
 And dares the world to tax him with the old,

220

So 'scapes the insulting fire his narrow jail
 And makes small outlets into open air,
 There the fierce winds his tender force assail
 And beat him downward to his first repair

221

The winds, like crafty courtesans, withheld
 His flames from burning but to blow them more
 And, every fresh attempt, he is repelled
 With faint denials, weaker than before,¹

222

And now, no longer letted of his prey,
 He leaps up at it with enraged desire,
 O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
 And nods at every house his threatening fire

223

The ghosts of traitors from the Bridge² descend,
 With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice
 About the fire into a dance they bend
 And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice

224

Our guardian angel saw them where they sate,
 Above the palace of our slumbering King
 He sighed, abandoning his charge to Fate,
 And drooping oft looked back upon the wing

¹ *Like crafty*, &c 'Haec arte tractabat cupidum virum ut illius animum inopia accenderet' (Dryden)

See Terence, *Heaut* ii 3 125

'Haec arte tractabat virum
 Ut illius animum cupidum inopia incenderet'

² London Bridge, on which the heads of traitors were exposed

225

At length the crackling noise and dreadful blaze
Called up some waking lover to the sight,
And long it was ere he the rest could raise,
Whose heavy eyelids yet were full of night

226

The next to danger, hot pursued by fate,
Half-clothed, half-naked, hastily retire,
And frightened mothers strike their breasts too late
For helpless infants left amidst the fire

227

Their cries soon waken all the dwellers near,
Now murmuring noises rise in every street,
The more remote run stumbling with their fear,
And in the dark men jostle as they meet

228

So weary bees in little cells repose,
But if night robbers lift the well stored hive,
An humming through their waxen city grows,
And out upon each other's wings they drive

229

Now streets grow thronged and busy as by day,
Some run for buckets to the hallowed quire,
Some cut the pipes, and some the engines play,
And some more bold mount ladders to the fire

230

In vain, for from the east a Belgian wind
His hostile breath through the dry rafters sent,
The flames impelled soon left their foes behind
And forward with a wanton fury went

231

A key¹ of fire ran all along the shore
And lighted all the river with a blaze,²
The wakened tides began again to roar,
And wondering fish in shining waters gaze

¹ The old spelling of quay

² 'Sigea igni fieta lata relucens'—Virg (Dryden) [*Aen* ii 312]

232

Old Father Thames raised up his reverend head,
But feared the fate of Simois¹ would return,
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedgy bed
And shrank his waters back into his urn

233

The fire meantime walks in a broader gross,
To either hand his wings he opens wide,
He wades the streets, and straight he reaches cross
And plays his longing flames on the other side

234

At first they warm, then scorch, and then they take,
Now with long necks from side to side they feed,
At length, grown strong, their mother fire forsake,
And a new colony of flames succeed

235

To every nobler portion of the town
The curling billows roll their restless tide,
In parties now they straggle up and down,
As armies unopposed for prey divide

236

One mighty squadron, with a sidewind sped,
Through narrow lanes his cumbered fire does haste
By powerful charms of gold and silver led
The Lombard bankers and the Change to waste

237

Another backward to the Tower would go
And slowly eats his way against the wind,
But the main body of the marching foe
Against the imperial palace is designed

238

Now day appears, and with the day the King,
Whose early care had robbed him of his rest,
Far off the cracks of falling houses ring
And shrieks of subjects pierce his tender breast

¹ The river Scamander was burnt up by Vulcan, when he was defending Achilles. It called its tributary Simois to its aid.

239

Near as he draws, thick harbingers of smoke
With gloomy pillars cover all the place ,
Whose little intervals of night are broke
By sparks that drive against his sacred face

240

More than his guards his sorrows made him known
And pious tears which down his cheeks did shower ,
The wretched in his grief forgot their own ,
So much the pity of a king has power

241

He wept the flames of what he loved so well
And what so well had merited his love ,
For never prince in grace did more excel
Or royal city more in duty strove

242

Nor with an idle care did he behold
Subjects may grieve, but monarchs must redress ,
He cheers the fearful and commends the bold
And makes despairers hope for good success

243

Himself directs what first is to be done
And orders all the succours which they bring ,
The helpful and the good about him run
And form an army worthy such a King

244

He sees the dire contagion spread so fast
That, where it seizes, all relief is vain,
And therefore must unwillingly lay waste
That country which would else the foe maintain

245

The powder blows up all before the fire ,
The amazed flames stand gathered on a heap,
And from the precipice's brink retire,
Afraid to venture on so large a leap

246

Thus fighting fires a while themselves consume,
But straight, like Turks forced on to win or die,
They first lay tender bridges of their fume
And o'er the breach in unctuous vapours fly

247

Part stays for passage, till a gust of wind
Ships o'er their forces in a shining sheet,
Part, creeping under ground, their journey blind
And, climbing from below, their fellows meet

248

Thus to some desert plain or old wood-side
Dire night-hags come from far to dance their round,
And o'er broad rivers on their fiends they ride
Or sweep in clouds above the blasted ground

249

No help avails for, hydra-like, the fire
Lifts up his hundred heads to aim his way,
And scarce the wealthy can one half retire
Before he rushes in to share the prey

250

The rich grow suppliant and the poor grow proud
Those offer mighty gain and these ask more,
So void of pity is the ignoble crowd,
When others' ruin may increase their store

251

As those who live by shores with joy behold
Some wealthy vessel split or stranded nigh,
And from the rocks leap down for shipwrecked gold
And seek the tempest which the others fly

252

So these but wait the owners' last despair
And what's permitted to the flames invade,
Even from their jaws they hungry morsels tear
And on their backs the spoils of Vulcan lade

253

The days were all in this lost labour spent,
And when the weary King gave place to night,
His beams he to his royal brother lent,
And so shone still in his reflective light

254

Night came, but without darkness or repose,
A dismal picture of the general doom,
Where souls distracted, when the trumpet blows,
And half unready with their bodies come

255

Those who have homes, when home they do repair,
To a last lodging call their wandering friends,
Their short uneasy sleeps are broke with care,
To look how near their own destruction tends

256

Those who have none sit round where once it was
And with full eyes each wonted room requie,
Haunting the yet warm ashes of the place,
As murdered men walk where they did expire

257

Some stir up coals and watch the vestal fire,
Others in vain from sight of ruin run
And, while through burning labyrinths they retire,
With loathing eyes repeat what they would shun

258

The most in fields like herded beasts lie down,
To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor,
And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,
Sad parents watch the remnants of their store

259

While by the motion of the flames they guess
What streets are burning now, and what are near,
An infant, waking, to the paps would press
And meets instead of milk a falling tear

260

No thought can ease them but their Sovereign's care,
Whose praise the afflicted as their comfort sing,
Even those whom want might drive to just despair
Think life a blessing under such a King

261

Meantime he sadly suffers in their grief,
Outweeps an hermit and outprays a saint,
All the long night he studies their relief,
How they may be supplied and he may want

262

' O God,' said he, ' Thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress '
Who me unfriended broughtst by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess,

263

' Be Thou my judge, with what unwearied care
I since have laboured for my people's good,
To bind the bruises of a civil war
And stop the issues of their wasting blood

264

' Thou who hast taught me to forgive the ill
And recompense as friends the good misled,
If mercy be a precept of Thy will,
Return that mercy on Thy servant's head

265

' Or if my heedless youth has stepped astray,
Too soon forgetful of Thy gracious hand,
On me alone Thy just displeasure lay,
But take Thy judgements from this mourning land

266

' We all have sinned, and Thou hast laid us low
As humble earth from whence at first we came,
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame

267

O let it be enough what Thou hast done,
When spotted deaths ran armed through every street,
With poisoned darts, which not the good could shun,
The speedy could outfly or valiant meet¹

268

' The living few and frequent funerals then
Proclaimed Thy wrath on this forsaken place ,
And now those few, who are returned again,
Thy searching judgements to their dwellings trace

269

' O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree
Or bind Thy sentence unconditional,
But in Thy sentence our remorse foresee
And in that foresight thus Thy doom recall

270

' Thy threatenings, Lord, as Thine Thou mayest revoke
But if immutable and fixed they stand,
Continue still Thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress Thy land '

271

The Eternal heard, and from the heavenly quire
Chose out the cherub with the flaming sword,
And bade him swiftly drive the approaching fire
From where our naval magazines were stored

272

The blessed minister his wings displayed,
And like a shooting star he cleft the night ,
He charged the flames, and those that disobeyed
He lashed to duty with his sword of light

273

The fugitive flames, chastised, went forth to prey
On pious structures by our fathers reared ,
By which to Heaven they did affect the way,
Ere faith in churchmen without works was heard

¹ A reference to the Great Plague of 1665

274

The wanting orphans saw with watery eyes
Their founders' charity in dust laid low,
And sent to God their ever-answered cries,
For he protects the poor who made them so

275

Not could thy fabric, Paul's, defend thee long,
Though thou wert sacred to thy Maker's praise,
Though made immortal by a poet's song,¹
And poets' songs the Theban walls could raise

276

The daring flames peeped in and saw from far
The awful beauties of the sacred quire,
But, since it was profaned by civil war,
Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire

277

Now down the narrow streets it swiftly came
And, widely opening, did on both sides prey,
This benefit we sadly owe the flame,
If only run must enlarge our way

278

And now four days the Sun had seen our woes,
Four nights the Moon beheld the incessant fire,
It seemed as if the stars more sickly rose
And farther from the feverish North retire

279

In the empyrean Heaven, the blessed abode,
The thrones and the dominions prostrate lie,
Not daring to behold their angry God,
And a hushed silence damps the tuneful sky

¹ A reference to Waller's poem *Upon His Majesty's repairing of St Paul's*

² The walls of Thebes were fabled to have built themselves at the song of Amphion.

280

At length the Almighty cast a pitying eye,
And mercy softly touched His melting breast,
He saw the town's one half in rubbish lie
And eager flames give on to storm the rest

281¹

An hollow crystal pyramid he takes,
In firmamental waters dipped above,
Of it a broad extinguisher he makes,
And hoods the flames that to their quarry strove²

282

The vanquished fires withdraw from every place
Or, full with feeding, sink into a sleep
Each household Genius shows again his face
And from the hearths the little Lares creep

283

Our King thus more than natural change beholds,
With sober joy his heart and eyes abound,
To the All good his lifted hands he folds,
And thanks him low on his redeemed ground

284

As, when sharp frosts had long constrained the earth,
A kindly thaw unlocks it with mild rain,
And first the tender blade peeps up to birth,
And straight the green fields laugh with promised grain

285

By such degrees the spreading gladness grew
In every heart which fear had froze before,
The standing streets with so much joy they view
That, with less grief the perished they deplore

¹ See Introduction, p 1

² A metaphor taken from hawking The hawk's eyes were covered when it was desirable to keep him from attacking his prey

286

The father of the people opened wide
 His stores, and all the poor with plenty fed
 Thus God's anointed God's own place supplied
 And filled the empty with his daily bread

287

This royal bounty brought its own reward
 And in their minds so deep did print the sense,
 That, if their runs sadly they regard,
 'Tis but with fear the sight might drive him thence

288

But so may he live long that town to sway
 Which by his auspice they will nobler make,
 As he will hatch their ashes by his stay
 And not their humble runs now forsake

289

They have not lost their loyalty by fire,
 Nor is their courage or their wealth so low,
 That from his wars they poorly would retire
 Or beg the pity of a vanquished foe

290

Not with more constancy the Jews of old,
 By Cyrus from rewarded exile sent,
 Their royal city did in dust behold
 Or with more vigour to rebuild it went¹

291

The utmost malice of their stars is past,
 And two dire comets which have scourged the town
 In their own plague and fire have breathed their last,
 Or dimly in their sinking sockets frown

292

Now frequent trines² the happier lights among,
 And high-raised Jove from his dark prison freed,
 Those weights took off that on his planet hung,
 Will gloriously the new-laid work succeed

¹ Ezra i 3

² A trine is a conjunction of planets in the form of a triangle. It was considered specially lucky. Jupiter in ascension was also fortunate

293

Methinks already from this chymic flame
I see a city of more precious mould,
Rich as the town which gives the Indies name,
With silver paved and all divine with gold¹

294

Already, labouring with a mighty fate,
She shakes the rubbish from her mounting brow
And seems to have renewed her charter's date
Which Heaven will to the death of time allow

295

More great than human now and more August,²
Now deified she from her fires does rise
Her widening streets on new foundations trust,
And, opening, into larger parts she flies

296

Before, she like some shepherdess did show
Who sate to bathe her by a river's side,
Not answering to her fame, but rude and low,
Nor taught the beauteous arts of modern pride

297

Now like a maiden queen she will behold
From her high turrets hourly suitors come,
The East with incense and the West with gold
Will stand like suppliants to receive her doom

298

The silver Thames, her own domestic flood,
Shall bear her vessels like a sweeping train,
And often wind, as of his mistress proud,
With longing eyes to meet her face again

299

The wealthy Tagus and the wealthier Rhine
The glory of their towns no more shall boast,
And Seine, that would with Belgian rivers join,
Shall find her lustre stained and traffic lost

¹ Mexico (Dryden)

Augusta, the old name of London (Dryden)

300

The venturous merchant who designed more far
And touches on our hospitable shore,
Charmed with the splendour of this northern star
Shall here unlade him and depart no more

301

Our powerful navy shall no longer meet
The wealth of France or Holland to invade,
The beauty of this town without a fleet
From all the world shall vindicate her trade

302

And while this famed emporium we prepare,
The British ocean shall such triumphs boast,
That those who now disdain our trade to share
Shall rob like pirates on our wealthy coast

303

Already we have conquered half the war,
And the less dangerous part is left behind,
Our trouble now is but to make them dare
And not so great to vanquish as to find

304

Thus to the Eastern wealth through storms we go,
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more,
A constant trade-wind will securely blow
And gently lay us on the spicy shore

THE HIND AND THE PANTHER

1687

THE THIRD PART

FOR now the Hind¹, whose noble nature strove
To express her plain simplicity of love,
Did all the honours of her house so well,
No sharp debates disturbed the friendly meal
She turned the talk, avoiding that extreme,
To common dangers past, a sadly pleasing theme,
Remembering every storm which tossed the State,
When both were objects of the public hate,
And dropped a tear betwixt for her own children's fate
Nor failed she then a full review to make 10
Of what the Panther suffered for her sake
Her lost esteem, her truth, her loyal care,
Her faith unshaken to an exiled heir,²
Her strength to endure, her courage to defy,
Her choice of honourable infamy
On these proudly thankful she enlarged,
Then with acknowledgements her self she charged,
For friendship, of it self an holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity
Now should they part, malicious tongues would say 20
They met like chance companions on the way,
Whom mutual fear of robbers had possessed,
While danger lasted, kindness was professed,
But that once o'er, the short-lived union ends,
The road divides, and there divide the friends
The Panther nodded when her speech was done,
And thanked her coldly in a hollow tone
But said, her gratitude had gone too far

¹ The milk-white Hind' represents the Church of Rome, and the Panther, the Church of England. The Hind having met the Panther invites her to come home with her, and they discourse by the way.

² A reference to the support given by the English Church to James, Duke of York (afterwards James II), when the Exclusion Bill was being discussed, and an attempt was being made to cut him off from the succession on account of his religious views.

For common offices of Christian care
 If to the lawful heir she had been true, 30
 She paid but Caesar what was Caesar's due
 'I might,' she added, 'with like praise describe
 Your suffering sons, and so return your bribe
 But incense from my hands is poorly prized,
 For gifts are scorned where givers are despised
 I served a turn, and then was cast away,
 You, like the gaudy fly, your wings display,
 And sip the sweets, and bask in your great Patron's day'

Thus heard, the matron was not slow to find
 What sort of malady had seized her mind 40
 Disdain, with gnawing envy, fell despite,
 And cankered malice stood in open sight
 Ambition, interest, pride without control,
 And jealousy, the jaundice of the soul,
 Revenge, the bloody minister of ill,
 With all the lean tormenters of the will
 'Twas easy now to guess from whence arose
 Her new-made union with her ancient foes,¹
 Her forced civilities, her faint embrace,
 Affected kindness with an altered face 50
 Yet durst she not too deeply probe the wound,
 As hoping still the nobler parts were sound,
 But strove with anodynes to assuage the smart,
 And mildly thus her medicine did impart

'Complaints of lovers help to ease their pain,
 It shows a rest of kindness to complain,
 A friendship loth to quit its former hold,
 And conscious merit may be justly bold,
 But much more just your jealousy would show,
 If others' good were injury to you 60
 Witness, ye heavens, how I rejoice to see
 Rewarded worth and rising loyalty'
 Your warrior offspring that upheld the crown,
 The scarlet honours of your peaceful gown,
 Are the most pleasing objects I can find,
 Charms to my sight and cordials to my mind
 When virtue spooms² before a prosperous gale,

¹ The Nonconformists

² To spoom is to sail before the wind

My heaving wishes help to fill the sail,
 And if my prayers for all the brave were heard 69
 Caesar should still have such, and such should still reward

'The laboured earth your pains have sowed and tilled,
 'Tis just you reap the product of the field

Yours be the harvest, 'tis the beggar's gain
 To glean the fallings of the loaded wain
 Such scattered ears as are not worth your care

Your charity for alms may safely spare,
 And alms are but the vehicles of prayer

My daily bread is literally implored,
 I have no barns nor granaries to hoard

If Caesar to his own his hand extends, 80
 Say which of yours his charity offends,

You know, he largely gives to more than are his friends
 Are you defrauded, when he feeds the poor?

Our mite decreases nothing of your store
 I am but few, and by your fare you see

My cying sins are not of luxury

Some juster motive sure your mind withdraws
 And makes you break our friendship's holy laws,
 For barefaced envy is too base a cause

'Show more occasion for your discontent, 90

Your love, the Wolf,¹ would help you to invent
 Some German quarrel,² or, as times go now,

Some French, where force is uppermost, will do
 When at the fountain's head, as merit ought

To claim the place, you take a swilling draught,
 How easy 'tis an envious eye to throw

And tax the sheep for troubling streams below,
 Or call her, when no farther cause you find,

An enemy professed of all your kind'

But then, perhaps, the wicked world would think 100
 The Wolf designed to eat as well as drink'

This last allusion galled the Panther more,
 Because indeed it rubbed upon the sore,
 Yet seemed she not to wince, though shrewdly pained,
 But thus her passive character maintained

¹ Cf Part I, ll 160-195 The Wolf represents the Presbyterian Church

² i e a quarrel picked without a cause

'I never grudged, whate'er my foes report,
 Your flaunting fortune in the Lion's court
 You have your day, or you are much belied,
 But I am always on the suffering side,
 You know my doctrine, and I need not say 110
 I will not, but I cannot disobey
 On this firm principle I ever stood
 He of my sons who fails to make it good
 By one rebellious act renounces to my blood'
 'Ah!' said the Hind, 'how many sons have you
 Who call you mother whom you never knew'
 But most of them who that relation plead
 Are such ungracious youths as wish you dead
 They gape at rich revenues which you hold
 And fan would nibble at your grandam gold, 120
 Inquire into your years, and laugh to find
 Your crazy temper shows you much declined
 Were you not dim and doted, you might see
 A pack of cheats that claim a pedigree,
 No more of kin to you than you to me
 Do you not know that for a little coin
 Heralds can foist a name into the line?

'Your sons of latitude that court your grace,
 Though most resembling you in form and face,
 Are far the worst of your pretended race, 130
 And, but I blush your honesty to blot,
 Pray God you prove them lawfully begot

Their malice too a sore suspicion brings,
 For though they dare not bark, they snarl at kings
 Nor blame them for intruding in your line,
 Fat bishoprics are still of right divine

'Think you your new French proselytes¹ are come
 To starve abroad, because they starved at home?
 Your benefices twinkled from afar,
 They found the new Messiah by the star 140
 Those Swisses fight on any side for pay,
 And 'tis the living that conforms, not they
 Mark with what management their tribes divide,

¹ The Huguenots who, exiled from France, were pouring into England

Some stick to you, and some to t'other side,
 That many churches may for many mouths provide
 More vacant pulpits would more converts make,
 All would have latitude enough to take
 The rest unbeneficed your sects maintain,
 For ordinations without cures are vain,
 And chamber practice is a silent gain 150
 Your sons of breadth at home are much like these,
 Their soft and yielding metals run with ease,
 They melt, and take the figure of the mould,
 But harden and preserve it best in gold'

'Your Delphic sword,'¹ the Panther then replied,
 Is double-edged and cuts on either side
 Some sons of mine, who bear upon their shield
 Three steeples argent in a sable field,²
 Have sharply taxed your converts, who unfed
 Have followed you for miracles of bread, 160
 Such who themselves of no religion are,
 Allured with gain, for any will declare
 Bare lies with bold assertions they can face,
 But dint of argument is out of place,
 The grim logician³ puts them in a fright,
 'Tis easier far to flourish than to fight
 Thus, our eighth Henry's marriage they defame,
 They say the schism of beds began the game
 Divorcing from the Church to wed the dame,
 Though largely proved, and by himself professed, 170
 That conscience, conscience would not let him rest,
 I mean, not till possessed of her he loved,
 And old, uncharming Catherine was removed
 For sundry years before did he complain,
 And told his ghostly confessor his pain
 With the same impudence, without a ground
 They say that, look the Reformation round,
 No Treatise of Humility is found
 But if none were, the Gospel does not want,
 Our Saviour preached it, and I hope you grant 180

¹ Aristotle (*Politics* I ii) speaks of a 'Delphic knife', meaning one that can be used for many different purposes ² Supposed to refer to several benefices being held by one clergyman, and to be a hit at Stillingfleet in particular ³ Dryden was so called by Stillingfleet

The Sermon in the Mount was Protestant '
 'No doubt,' replied the Hind, 'as sure as all
 The writings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul,
 On that decision let it stand or fall
 Now for my converts, who, you say, unfed
 Have followed me for miracles of bread
 Judge not by hearsay, but observe at least,
 If since their change their loaves have been increast
 The Lion¹ buys no converts, if he did,
 Beasts would be sold as fast as he could bid 190
 Tax those of interest who conform for gain
 Or stay the market of another reign
 Your broad way sons would never be too nice
 To close with Calvin, if he paid their price,
 But, raised three steeples higher, would change their note,
 And quit the cassock for the canting-coat
 Now, if you damn this censure as too bold,
 Judge by your selves, and think not others sold
 Meantime my sons accused by fame's report
 Pay small attendance at the Lion's court, 200
 Nor rise with early crowds, nor flatter late
 (For silently they beg who daily wait)
 Preferment is bestowed that comes unsought,
 Attendance is a bribe, and then 'tis bought
 How they should speed, their fortune is untried,
 For not to ask is not to be denied
 For what they have then God and King they bless,
 And hope they should not murmur had they less
 But if reduced subsistence to implore,
 In common prudence they would pass your door 210
 Unpitied Hudibras², your champion friend,
 Has shown how far your charities extend
 This lasting verse shall on his tomb be read,
He shamed you living, and upbraids you dead
 'With odious atheist names you load your foes,
 Your liberal clergy why did I expose?
 It never fails in charities like those
 In climes where true religion is professed,
 That imputation were no laughing jest,

¹ James II² Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, is said to have died of want Cf p 160

But *Imprimatur*, with a chaplain's name,¹ 220
 Is here sufficient licence to defame
 What wonder is't that black detraction thrives,
 The homicide of names is less than lives,
 And yet the perjured murderer survives'

This said, she paused a little, and suppressed
 The boiling indignation of her breast
 She knew the virtue of her blade, nor would
 Pollute her ~~satur~~ with ignoble blood,
 Her panting foes she saw before her lie,
 And back she drew the shining weapon dry 230
 So when the generous Lion has in sight
 His equal match, he rouses for the fight,
 But when his foe lies prostrate on the plain,
 He sheathes his paws, uncurls his angry mane,
 And, pleased with bloodless honours of the day,
 Walks over and disdains the inglorious prey
 So James, if great with less we may compare,
 Arrests his rolling thunder-bolts in air,
 And grants ungrateful friends a lengthened space
 To implore the remnants of long-suffering grace 240

This breathing time the matron took, and then
 Resumed the third of her discourse again
 'Be vengeance wholly left to powers divine,
 And let Heaven judge betwixt your sons and mine
 If joys hereafter must be purchased here
 With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,
 Then welcome infamy and public shame,
 And last, a long farewell to worldly fame
 'Tis said with ease, but oh, how hardly tied 250
 By haughty souls to human honour tied'
 O sharp convulsive pangs of agonizing pride!
 Down then, thou rebel, never more to rise,
 And what thou didst and dost so dearly prize,
 That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice
 'Tis nothing thou hast given, then add thy tears
 For a long race of unrepenting years
 'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hast to give
 Then add those may be years thou hast to live

¹ Stillingfleet's pamphlets were licensed by the Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain

Yet nothing still then poor and naked come,
 Thy Father will receive his unthrift home, 260
 And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum'
 'Thus,' she pursued, 'I discipline a son,
 Whose unchecked fury to revenge would run,
 He champs the bit, impatient of his loss,
 And starts aside and flounders at the Cross
 Instruct him better, gracious God, to know
 As Thine is vengeance, so forgiveness too, -
 That, suffering from ill tongues, he bears no more
 Than what his Sovereign bears and what his Saviour bore
 'It now remains for you to school your child, 270
 And ask why God's anointed he reviled,
 A King and Princess dead' did Shimei worse?
 The curser's punishment should fright the curse,
 Your son was warned, and wisely gave it o'er,
 But he who counselled him has paid the score,
 The heavy malice could no higher tend,
 But woe to him on whom the weights descend
 So to permitted ills the daemon flies,
 His rage is aimed at him who rules the skies
 Constrained to quit his cause, no succour found, 280
 The foe discharges every tire¹ around,
 In clouds of smoke abandoning the fight,
 But his own thundering peals proclaim his flight
 'In Henry's change his charge as ill succeeds,
 To that long story little answer needs
 Confront but Henry's words with Henry's deeds
 Were space allowed, with ease it might be proved,
 What springs his blessed reformation moved
 The dire effects appeared in open sight,
 Which from the cause he calls a distant flight, 290
 And yet no larger leap than from the sun to light
 'Now last, your sons a double paean sound,
 A Treatise of Humility is found
 'Tis found, but better had it ne'er been sought -
 Than thus in Protestant procession brought
 The famed original through Spain is known,
 Rodriguez'² work, my celebrated son,

¹ Tier of guns

² Alonzo Rodriguez, a Jesuit priest who in 1609 published a book

Which yours by ill-translating made his own,
 Concealed its author, and usurped the name,
 The basest and ignoblest theft of fame 300
 My altars kindled first that living coal,
 Restore, or practise better what you stole,
 That virtue could this humble verse inspire,
 'Tis all the restitution I require'

Glad was the Panther that the charge was closed,
 And none of all her favourite sons exposed,
 For laws of arms permit each injured man
 To make himself a saviour where he can
 Perhaps the plundered merchant cannot tell
 The names of pirates in whose hands he fell, 310
 But at the den of thieves he justly flies,
 And every Algerine¹ is lawful prize
 No private person in the foe's estate
 Can plead exemption from the public fate
 Yet Christian laws allow not such redress,
 Then let the greater supersede the less
 But let the abettors of the Panther's crime
 Learn to make fairer wars another time
 Some characters may sure be found to write
 Among her sons, for 'tis no common sight, 320
 A spotted dam, and all her offspring white

The savage, though she saw her plea controlled,
 Yet would not wholly seem to quit her hold,
 But offered fairly to compound the strife
 And judge conversion by the convert's life
 'Tis true,' she said, 'I think it somewhat strange
 So few should follow profitable change,
 For present joys are more to flesh and blood
 Than a dull prospect of a distant good
 'Twas well alluded by a son of mine, 330
 (I hope to quote him is not to purloin,)
 Two magnets, heaven and earth, allure to bliss,
 The larger loadstone that, the nearer this
 The weak attraction of the greater fails,
 We nod awhile, but neighbourhood prevails,

called *Exercicio de Perfection y Virtudes Christianas* This work formed the original of a *Treatise of Humility* quoted by Stillingfleet

¹ Algiers was notorious as the home of the most daring pirates

But when the greater proves the nearer too,
 I wonder more you converts come so slow
 Methinks in those who firm with me remain,
 It shows a nobler principle than gain ' 339
 ' Your inference would be strong,' the Hind replied,
 ' If yours were in effect the suffering side ,
 Your clergy-sons their own in peace possess,
 Nor are their prospects in reversion less
 My proselytes are struck with awful dread,
 Your bloody comet laws hang blazing o'er their head ,
 The respite they enjoy but only lent,
 The best they have to hope, protracted punishment
 Be judge yourself, if interest may prevail,
 Which motives, yours or mine, will turn the scale
 While pride and pomp allure, and plenteous ease, 350
 That is, till man's predominant passions cease,
 Admire no longer at my slow increase
 ' By education most have been misled ;
 So they believe, because they so were bred
 The priest continues what the nurse began,
 And thus the child imposes on the man
 The rest I named before, nor need repeat ,
 But interest is the most prevailing cheat,
 The sly seducer both of age and youth ,
 They study that, and think they study truth 360
 When interest fortifies an argument,
 Weak reason serves to gain the will's assent ,
 For souls already warped receive an easy bent
 ' Add long prescription of established laws,
 And pique of honour to maintain a cause,
 And shame of change, and fear of future ill,
 And zeal, the blind conductor of the will ,
 And chief among the still mistaking crowd,
 The fame of teachers obstinate and proud ,
 And, more than all, the private judge allowed , 370
 Disdain of Fathers which the dance began,
 And last, uncertain whose the narrower span,
 The clown unread and half read gentleman '
 To this the Panther, with a scornful smile
 ' Yet still you travail with unweaned toil,
 And range around the realm without control,

Among my sons for proselytes to prowl,
 And here and there you snap some silly soul
 You hinted fears of future change in state,
 Pray Heaven you did not prophesy your fate ! 380
 Perhaps, you think your time of triumph near,
 But may mistake the season of the year,
 The Swallows' ¹ fortune gives you cause to fear'
 'For charity,' replied the matron, 'tell
 What sad mischance those pretty birds befel'
 'Nay, no mischance,' the savage dame replied,
 'But want of wit in their unerring gude,
 And eager haste and gaudy hopes and giddy pride
 Yet, wishing timely warning may prevail,
 Make you the moral, and I'll tell the tale 390
 'The Swallow, privileged above the rest
 Of all the birds as man's familiar guest,
 Pursues the sun in summer, brisk and bold,
 But wisely shuns the persecuting cold,
 Is well to chancels and to chimneys known,
 Though 'tis not thought she feeds on smoke alone
 From hence she has been held of heavenly line,
 Endued with particles of soul divine
 This merry chorister had long possess
 Her summer seat, and feathered well her nest, 400
 Till frowning skies began to change their cheer,
 And time turned up the wrong side of the year,
 The shedding trees began the ground to strow
 With yellow leaves, and bitter blasts to blow
 Sad auguries of winter thence she drew,
 Which by instinct or prophecy she knew
 When prudence warned her to remove betimes,
 And seek a better heaven and warmer climes
 'Her sons were summoned on a steeple's height,
 And, called in common council, vote a flight, 410

¹ The Swallows represent the Church of Rome. Scott thinks that the fable has special reference to a meeting held in the Savoy Palace in 1686, to consider the prospects of the Roman Catholics in England. Father Petre—the Martin of the fable—was in the chair. The majority were for moderation, but Father Petre strongly opposed all compromise. The gleam of sunshine which gives the Swallows new hope, is probably James's Declaration of Indulgence. The Swifts, who first see the coming of spring, are the Irish Roman Catholics.

The day was named, the next that should be fair,
 All to the general rendezvous repair,
 They try their fluttering wings and trust themselves in air,
 But whether upward to the moon they go,
 Or dream the winter out in caves below,
 Or hawk at flies elsewhere, concerns not us to know
 'Southwards, you may be sure, they bent their flight,
 And harboured in a hollow rock at night,
 Next morn they rose, and set up every sail;
 The wind was fair, but blew a mackrel gale 420
 The sickly young sat shivering on the shore,
 Abhorred salt-water never seen before,
 And prayed their tender mothers to delay
 The passage, and expect a fairer day
 'With these the Martin readily concurred,
 A church-begot and church-believing bird,
 Of little body, but of lofty mind,
 Round bellied, for a dignity designed,
 And much a dunce, as Martins are by kind,
 Yet often quoted Canon-laws and Code 430
 And Fathers which he never understood,
 But little learning needs in noble blood
 For, sooth to say, the Swallow brought him in
 Her household chaplain and her next of kin
 In superstition silly to excess,
 And casting schemes by planetary guess,
 In fine, short-winged, unfit himself to fly,
 His fear foretold foul weather in the sky
 'Besides, a Raven from a withered oak
 Left of their lodging was observed to croak 440
 That omen liked him not, so his advice
 Was present safety, bought at any price,
 A seeming pious care that covered cowardice
 To strengthen this, he told a boding dream,
 Of rising waters and a troubled stream,
 Sure signs of anguish, dangers, and distress,
 With something more not lawful to express
 By which he slyly seemed to intimate
 Some secret revelation of their fate
 For he concluded, once upon a time, 450
 He found a leaf inscribed with sacred rhyme,

Whose antique characters did well denote
 The Sibyl's hand of the Cumæan grot¹
 The mad divineress had plainly writ,
 A time should come (but many ages yet)
 In which sinister destinies ordain
 A dame should drown with all her feathered train,
 And seas from thence be called the Chelidonian² main
 At this, some shook for fear, the more devout
 Arose, and blessed themselves from head to foot 460
 'Tis true, some staggers of the wiser sort
 Made all these idle wonderments their sport
 They said, their only danger was delay,
 And he who heard what every fool could say
 Would never fix his thoughts, but trim his time away
 The passage yet was good, the wind, 'tis true,
 Was somewhat high, but that was nothing new,
 Nor more than usual equinoxes blew
 The sun, already from the Scales declined,
 Gave little hopes of better days behind, 470
 But change from bad to worse of weather and of wind
 Nor need they fear the dampness of the sky
 Should flag their wings, and hinder them to fly,
 'Twas only water thrown on sails too dry
 But, least of all philosophy presumes
 Of truth in dreams from melancholy fumes,
 Perhaps the Martin, housed in holy ground,
 Might think of ghosts that walk their midnight round,
 Till grosser atoms tumbling in the stream
 Of fancy madly met and clubbed into a dream 480
 As little weight his vain presages bear,
 Of ill effect to such alone who fear,
 Most prophecies are of a piece with these,
 Each Nostradamus³ can foretell with ease
 Not naming persons, and confounding times,
 One casual truth supports a thousand lying rhymes

¹ The Sibyl was a prophetess who was supposed to have inhabited a vast cavern in the rock at Cumæ

Chelidon (χελιδων) is the Greek for a swallow

³ Michel Notre Dame was a French prophet and physician of the sixteenth century Nostradamus, which is derived from his name became the common term for one who foretells the future

' The advice was true , but fear had seized the most,
 And all good counsel is on cowards lost
 The question crudely put to shun delay,
 'Twas carried by the major part to stay 490
 ' His point thus gained, Sir Martin dated thence
 His power, and from a priest became a prince
 He ordered all things with a busy care,
 And cells and refectories did prepare,
 And large provisions laid of winter fare ,
 But now and then let fall a word or two,
 Of hope, that Heaven some miracle might show,
 And for then sakes the sun should backward go,
 Against the laws of nature upward climb,
 And, mounted on the Ram¹, renew the prime , 500
 For which two proofs in sacred story lay,
 Of Ahaz' dial² and of Joshua's day³
 In expectation of such times as these,
 A chapel housed them, truly called of ease ,
 For Martin much devotion did not ask ,
 They prayed sometimes, and that was all their task
 ' It happened (as beyond the reach of wit
 Blind prophecies may have a lucky hit)
 That this accomplished, or at least in part,
 Gave great repute to their new Merlin's art 510
 Some Swifts, the giants of the Swallow kind,
 Large limbed, stout hearted, but of stupid mind
 (For Swisses or for Gibeonites designed),⁴
 These lubbers, peeping through a broken pane
 To suck fresh air, surveyed the neighbouring plain,
 And saw (but scarcely could believe their eyes)
 New blossoms flourish and new flowers arise,
 As God had been abroad, and walking there
 Had left his footsteps and reformed the year
 The sunny hills from far were seen to glow 520

¹ The Ram is the sign of the Zodiac which governs the latter part of March and the first half of April, therefore if the sun 'mounted' on the Ram', spring would return Cf Chaucer's *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, l 7-8 —

' the yonge sonne
 Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne'
² 2 Kings xx ³ Joshua x ⁴ The Swiss were the chief mercenaries of the day For Gibeonites see Joshua ix 23

With glittering beams, and in the meads below
The burnished brooks appeared with liquid gold to flow
At last they heard the foolish Cuckoo sing,
Whose note proclaimed the holy-day of spring

‘No longer doubting, all prepare to fly
And repossess their patrimonial sky
The priest before them did his wings display,
And that good omens might attend their way,
As luck would have it, ’twas St Martin’s day

‘Who but the Swallow now triumphs alone?’ 530

The canopy of heaven is all her own,
Her youthful offspring to their haunts repair,
And glide along in glades, and skim in air,
And dip for insects in the purling springs,
And stoop on rivers to refresh their wings
Their mothers think a fair provision made,

That every son can live upon his trade,
And, now the careful charge is off their hands,
Look out for husbands and new nuptial bands
The youthful widow longs to be supplied, 540
But first the lover is by lawyers tied

To settle jointure-chimneys on the bride
So thick they couple, in so short a space,
That Martin’s marriage-offerings rise apace,
Their ancient houses, running to decay,
Are furbished up and cemented with clay
They teem already, stores of eggs are laid,
And brooding mothers call Lucina’s¹ aid
Fame spreads the news, and foreign fowls appear
In flocks to greet the new returning year, 550
To bless the founder and partake the cheer

‘And now ’twas time (so fast their numbers rise)
To plant abroad, and people colonies
The youth drawn forth, as Martin had desired
(For so their cruel destiny required),
Were sent far off on an ill-fated day,

The rest would need conduct them on their way,
And Martin went, because he feared alone to stay

‘So long they flew with inconsiderate haste,
That now their afternoon began to waste, 560

¹ The goddess of child-birth

And, what was ominous, that very morn
 The Sun was entered into Capricorn ¹
 Which, by their bad astronomers' account,
 That week the Virgin balance ² should remount
 An infant moon eclipsed him in his way,
 And hid the small remainders of his day
 The crowd amazed pursued no certain mark,
 But birds met birds, and jostled in the dark
 Few mind the public in a panic fright,
 And fear increased the horror of the night 570
 Night came, but unattended with repose,
 Alone she came, no sleep their eyes to close,
 Alone, and black she came, no friendly stars arose
 'What should they do, beset with dangers round,
 No neighbouring dorp, ³ no lodging to be found,
 But bleakly plains, and bare unhospitable ground?
 The latter brood, who just began to fly,
 Sick feathered and unpractised in the sky,
 For succour to their helpless mother call 570
 She spread her wings, some few beneath them crawl,
 She spread them wider yet, but could not cover all
 To augment their woes, the winds began to move
 Debate in air for empty fields above,
 Till Boreas ⁴ got the skies, and poured amain
 His rattling hailstones mixed with snow and rain
 'The joyless morning late arose, and found
 A dreadful desolation reign around,
 Some buried in the snow, some frozen to the ground
 The rest were struggling still with death, and lay
 The Crows' and Ravens' rights, an undefended prey, 590
 Excepting Martin's race, for they and he
 Had gained the shelter of a hollow tree
 But soon discovered by a sturdy clown,
 He headed all the rabble of a town,
 And finished them with bats, or polled them down
 Martin himself was caught alive, and tried
 For treasonous crimes, because the laws provide

¹ Capricorn is the sign of the Zodiac which governs late December and early January ² Virgo is the sign of the Zodiac which governs late August and early September ³ The Dutch form of the English *thorpe*, a village ⁴ The god of the North Wind

No Martin there in winter shall abide
 High on an oak which never leaf shall bear,
 He breathed his last, exposed to open air, 600
 And there his corps, unblessed, is hanging still,
 To show the change of winds with his prophetic bill
 The patience of the Hind did almost fail,
 For well she marked the malice of the tale,
 Which ribald art their Church to Luther owes,
 In malice it began, by malice grows,
 He sowed the serpent's teeth, an iron-harvest rose¹
 But most in Martin's character and fate
 She saw her slandered sons, the Panther's hate,
 The people's rage, the persecuting State 610
 Then said, 'I take the advice in friendly part,
 You clear your conscience, or at least your heart
 Perhaps you failed in your foreseeing skill,
 For Swallows are unlucky birds to kill
 As for my sons, the family is blessed
 Whose every child is equal to the rest,
 No church reformed can boast a blameless line,
 Such Martins build in yours, and more than mine
 Or else an old fanatic author² lies,
 Who summed their scandals up by centuries 620
 But through your parable I plainly see
 The bloody laws, the crowd's barbarity,
 The sunshine that offends the purblind sight,
 Had some their wishes, it would soon be night
 Mistake me not, the charge concerns not you,
 Your sons are malcontents, but yet are true,
 As far as non resistance makes them so,
 But that's a word of neutral sense, you know,
 A passive term, which no relief will bring,
 But trims betwixt a rebel and a king' 630
 'Rest well assured,' the Pardalis³ replied,
 'My sons would all support the regal side,
 Though Heaven forbid the cause by battle should be tried'

¹ See the story of Jason, Ovid, *Met* vii 121 seq

² John White, a Puritan member of the Long Parliament. In 1643 he published *The First Century of Scandalous Malignant Priests made and admitted into Benefices by the Prelates*. He was nicknamed 'Century' White

³ The Greek and Latin name for a panther

The nation answered with a loud 'Amen'¹
 And thus pursued her argument again
 'If, as you say, and as I hope no less,
 Your sons will practise what yourself profess,
 What angry power prevents our present peace'
 The Lion, studious of our common good,
 Desires (and kings' desires are ill withstood) 640
 To join our nations in a lasting love,
 The bars betwixt are easy to remove,
 For sanguinary laws were never made above
 If you condemn that Prince of tyranny,
 Whose mandate forced your Gallic friends to fly,
 Make not a worse example of your own,
 Or cease to rail at causeless rigour shown,
 And let the guiltless person throw the stone
 His blunted sword your suffering brotherhood
 Have seldom felt, he stops it short of blood 650
 But you have ground the persecuting knife
 And set it to a razor edge on life
 Cursed be the wit which cruelty refines
 Or to his father's rod the scorpion joins,
 Your finger is more gross than the great monarch's loins
 But you perhaps remove that bloody note
 And stick it on the first Reformers' coat
 Oh, let their crime in long oblivion sleep,
 'Twas theirs indeed to make, 'tis yours to keep
 Unjust or just is all the question now, 660
 'Tis plain that, not repealing, you allow
 'To name the Test¹ would put you in a rage,
 You charge not that on any former age,
 But smile to think how innocent you stand,
 Armed by a weapon put into your hand
 Yet still remember that you wield a sword
 Forged by your foes against your sovereign lord,

¹ The Test Act of 1673, which required as a condition of holding office that the candidate should take the communion according to the rites of the Anglican Church, renounce the League and Covenant, and declare that it was unlawful on any grounds to take up arms against the King. It was used against both Roman Catholics and Nonconformists. The Nonconformists hoped by its means to exclude James from the throne. Charles II sought, by rigorously enforcing it, to compel the Nonconformists to accept a toleration which would include the Roman Catholics.

Designed to hew the imperial cedar down,
 Defraud succession and disheir the crown
 To abhor the makers and their laws approve 670
 Is to hate traitors and the treason love
 What means it else, which now your children say,
 We made it not, nor will we take away ?

' Suppose some great oppressor had by slight
 Of law disseised your brother of his right,
 Your common sire surrendering in a fright,
 Would you to that unrighteous title stand,
 Left by the villain's will to heir the land ?
 More just was Judas, who his Saviour sold,
 The sacrilegious bribe he could not hold, 680
 Nor hang in peace, before he rendered back the gold
 What more could you have done than now you do,
 Had Oates and Bedlow¹ and their Plot been true ?
 Some specious reasons for those wrongs were found,
 The dire magicians threw their mists around,
 And wise men walked as on enchanted ground
 But now, when Time has made the imposture plain
 (Late though he followed truth, and limping held her train),
 What new delusion charms your cheated eyes again ?
 The painted harlot might awhile bewitch, 690
 But why the hag uncased and all obscene with itch ?

' The first Reformers were a modest race,
 Our peeps possessed in peace their native place,
 And when rebellious arms o'erturned the State
 They suffered only in the common fate,
 But now the Sovereign mounts the regal chair,
 And mitred seats are full, yet David's bench is bare
 Your answer is, they were not dispossessed,
 They need but rub their metal on the Test
 To prove their ore, 'twere well if gold alone 700
 Were touched and tried on your discerning stone,
 But that unfaithful Test unfound will pass
 The dross of atheists and sectarian brass,
 As if the experiment were made to hold
 For base productions, and reject the gold

¹ See note, p 167 Bedloe (or Bedlow) was suborned to support the evidence of Oates. He swore to the existence of a plot to land a Papist army and massacre all the Protestants

Thus men ungodded may to places rise,
 And sects may be preferred without disguise,
 No danger to the Church or State from these,
 The Papist only has his writ of ease
 No gainful office gives him the pretence 710
 To grind the subject or defraud the prince,
 Wrong conscience or no conscience may deserve
 To thrive, but ours alone is privileged to starve
 'Still thank your selves, you cry, your noble race
 We banish not, but they forsake the place
 Our doors are open True, but ere they come,
 You toss your censuring Test and fume the room,
 As if 'twere Toby's rival to expel,
 And fright the fiend who could not bear the smell '1
 To this the Panther sharply had replied, 720
 But, having gained a verdict on her side,
 She wisely gave the loser leave to chide,
 Well satisfied to have the butt and peace,
 And for the plaintiff's cause she cared the less,
 Because she sued *in forma pauperis*,²
 Yet thought it decent something should be said,
 For secret guilt by silence is betrayed
 So neither granted all, nor much denied,
 But answered with a yawning kind of pride 729
 'Methinks such terms of proffered peace you bring,
 As once Aeneas to the Italian king³
 By long possession all the land is mine,
 You strangers come with your intruding line
 To share my sceptre, which you call to join
 You plead like him an ancient pedigree
 And claim a peaceful seat by Fate's decree
 In ready pomp your sacrificer stands,
 To unite the Trojan and the Latin bands
 And, that the league more firmly may be tied,
 Demand the fair Lavinia for your bride 740
 Thus plausibly you veil the intended wrong,
 But still you bring your exiled gods along,

¹ Tobit viii 1-3 Tobit drove away the evil spirit which haunted his bride, by fumigation 'The which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt'

² As a pauper The legal term for a suitor who could not afford to pay an advocate

³ *Aeneid*, Book vii

And will endeavour, in succeeding space,
 Those household poppits on our hearths to place
 Perhaps some barbarous laws have been preferred,
 I spake against the Test, but was not heard
 These to rescind and peerage to restore
 My gracious Sovereign would my vote implore,
 I owe him much, but owe my conscience more,
 'Conscience is then your plea,' replied the dame, 750
 'Which, well informed, will ever be the same
 But yours is much of the cameleon hue,
 To change the dye with every different view
 When first the Lion sat with awful sway,
 Your conscience taught you duty to obey,
 He might have had your statutes and your Test,
 No conscience but of subjects was professed
 He found your temper, and no farther tried,
 But on that broken reed, your Church, relied
 In vain the sects assayed their utmost art, 760
 With offered treasure to espouse their part,
 Their treasures were a bribe too mean to move his heart
 But when, by long experience, you had proved
 How far he could forgive, how well he loved,
 A goodness that excelled his godlike race,
 And only short of Heaven's unbounded grace,
 A flood of mercy that o'erflowed our isle,
 Calm in the rise, and fruitful as the Nile,
 Forgetting whence your Egypt was supplied, 769
 You thought your Sovereign bound to send the tide,
 Nor upward looked on that immortal spring,
 But vainly deemed he durst not be a king
 Then Conscience, unrestrained by fear, began
 To stretch her limits, and extend the span,
 Did his indulgence as her gift dispose,
 And made a wise alliance with her foes
 Can Conscience own the associating name,
 And raise no blushes to conceal her shame?
 For sure she has been thought a bashful dame
 But if the cause by battle should be tried, 780
 You grant she must espouse the regal side,
 O Proteus¹ Conscience, never to be tied¹

¹ Proteus was the herd of Poseidon, god of the sea Each day, it

What Phoebus from the tripod shall disclose¹
 Which are in last resort your friends or foes ?
 Homer, who learned the language of the sky,
 The seeming Gordian² knot would soon untie,
 Immortal powers the term of Conscience know,
 But Interest is her name with men below'

'Conscience or Interest be it, or both in one,'
 The Panther answered in a surly tone, 790
 'The first commands me to maintain the crown,
 The last forbids to throw my barriers down
 Our penal laws no sons of yours admit
 Our Test excludes your tribe from benefit
 These are my banks your ocean to withstand,
 Which proudly rising overlooks the land,
 And, once let in, with unresisted sway
 Would sweep the pastors and their flocks away
 Think not my judgement leads me to comply
 With laws unjust, but hard necessity 800
 Imperious need, which cannot be withstood,
 Makes ill authentic for a greater good,
 Possess your soul with patience, and attend,
 A more auspicious planet may ascend,
 Good fortune may present some happier time,
 With means to cancel my unwilling crime,
 (Unwilling, witness all ye Powers above !)
 To mend my errors and redeem your love
 That little space you safely may allow,
 Your all-dispensing power protects you now' 810
 'Hold,' said the Hind, ' 'tis needless to explain,
 You would postpone me to another reign,

noon, he rose from the waters and rested on a bank Any one wishing to foretell the future might then catch hold of him As they held him he changed into all kinds of terrible shapes, but if they held fast, he would at last resume his own form and tell them what they wished to know His name is used as the symbol of change

¹ The Tripod was the seat of the prophetess who, under the inspiration of Phoebus Apollo, gave oracular answers at Delphi

² Gordius, King of Gordium in Phrygia, left the harness of his chariot in an inextricable knot, prophesying that the Empire of Asia should fall to the man who could untie it Alexander the Great, during his invasion of Asia, visited Gordium, and hearing the prophecy, cut the knot with his sword

Till when, you are content to be unjust
 Your part is to possess, and mine to trust
 A fair exchange proposed of future chance
 For present profit and inheritance
 Few words will serve to finish our dispute,
 Who will not now repeal would persecute
 To ripen green revenge your hopes attend,
 Wishing that happier planet would ascend
 For shame, let conscience be your plea no more,

820

'Your care about your banks infers a fear
 Of threatening floods and inundations near,
 If so, a just reprise would only be
 Of what the land usurped upon the sea,
 And all your jealousies but serve to show
 Your ground is, like your neighbour-nation, low
 To entrench in what you grant unrighteous laws
 Is to distrust the justice of your cause,
 And argues, that the true religion lies

830

In those weak adversaries you despise
 'Tyrannic force is that which least you fear,
 The sound is frightful in a Christian's ear
 Avert it, Heaven! nor let that plague be sent
 To us from the dispeopled continent

'But piety commands me to refrain,
 Those prayers are needless in this Monarch's reign
 Behold how he protects your friends oppress'd,
 Receives the banished, succours the distrest'¹
 Behold, for you may read an honest open breast
 He stands in daylight, and disdains to hide
 An act to which by honour he is tied,
 A generous, laudable, and kingly pride
 Your Test he would repeal, his peers restore,
 Thus when he says he means, he means no more'

840

'Well,' said the Panther, 'I believe him just,
 And yet——'

'And yet, 'tis but because you must,
 You would be trusted, but you would not trust'

¹ A reference to the support given by James to the French Protestant refugees

The Hind thus briefly, and disdained to enlarge
 On power of kings and then superior charge, 850
 As Heaven's trustees before the people's choice,
 Though sure the Panther did not much rejoice
 To hear those echoes given of her once loyal voice
 'The matron wooed her kindness to the last,
 But could not win, her hour of grace was past
 Whom thus persisting when she could not bring
 To leave the Wolf and to believe her King-
 She gave her up, and fairly wished her joy
 Of her late treaty with her new ally
 Which well she hoped would more successful prove 860
 Than was the Pigeon's and the Buzzard's love¹
 The Panther asked what concord there could be
 Betwixt two kinds whose natures disagree?²
 The dame replied 'Tis sung in every street,
 The common chat of gossips when they meet,
 But, since unheard by you, 'tis worth your while
 To take a wholesome tale, though told in homely style
 'A plain good man, whose name is understood²
 (So few deserve the name of plain and good),
 Of three fair lineal lordships stood possest, 870
 And lived, as reason was, upon the best
 Inured to hardships from his early youth,
 Much had he done and suffered for his truth
 At land and sea, in many a doubtful fight,
 Was never known a more adventurous knight,
 Who oftener drew his sword, and always for the right
 'As Fortune would (his fortune came though late),
 He took possession of his just estate,
 Nor racked his tenants with increase of rent,
 Nor lived too sparing, nor too largely spent, 880
 But overlooked his hinds, their pay was just
 And ready, for he scorned to go on trust
 Slow to resolve, but in performance quick,
 So true that he was awkward at a trick
 For little souls on little shifts rely
 And coward arts of mean expedients try,
 The noble mind will dare do anything but lie

¹ The Buzzard is Dr Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury

² James II

False friends (his deadliest foes) could find no way
But shows of honest bluntness, to betray,
That unsuspected plainness he believed, 890
He looked into himself, and was deceived
Some lucky planet sure attends his birth
Or Heaven would make a miracle on earth,
For prosperous honesty is seldom seen
To bear so dead a weight, and yet to win,
It looks as Fate with Nature's law would strive
To show plain dealing once an age may thrive,
And, when so tough a frame she could not bend,
Exceeded her commission to befriend 899

' This grateful man, as Heaven increased his store,
Gave God again, and daily fed his poor
His house with all convenience was purveyed,
The rest he found, but raised the fabric where he prayed,
And in that sacred place his beauteous wife
Employed her happiest hours of holy life

' Nor did their alms extend to those alone
Whom common faith more strictly made their own,
A sort of Doves¹ were housed too near their hall,
Who cross the proverb, and abound with gall
Though some, 'tis true, are passively inclined, 910
The greater part degenerate from their kind,
Voracious birds, that hotly bill and breed,
And largely drink, because on salt they feed
Small gain from them their bounteous owner draws,
Yet, bound by promise, he supports their cause,
As corporations privileged by laws

' That house, which harbour to their kind affords,
Was built long since, God knows, for better birds,
But fluttering there, they nestle near the throne,
And lodge in habitations not their own, 920
By their high crops and corny gizzards known
Like harpies, they could scent a plenteous board,
Then, to be sure, they never failed their lord
The rest was form, and bare attendance paid,
They drunk, and eat, and grudgingly obeyed
The more they fed, they ravened still for more,
They drained from Dan, and left Beersheba poor

¹ The Church of England

All this they had by law, and none repined ,
 The preference was but due to Levi's kind
 But when some lay-preferment fell by chance, 930
 The gourmands made it their inheritance
 When once possessed, they never quit their claim,
 For then 'tis sanctified to Heaven's high name ,
 And, hallowed thus, they cannot give consent
 The gifts should be profaned by worldly management
 ' Their flesh was never to the table served ,
 Though 'tis not thence inferred the birds were starved
 But that their master did not like the food,
 As rank, and breeding melancholy blood
 Nor did it with his gracious nature suit, 940
 Even though they were not Doves, to persecute
 Yet he refused (nor could they take offence)
 Their glutton kind should teach him abstinence
 Nor consecrated grain their wheat he thought,
 Which, new from treading, in their bills they brought
 But left his hinds each in his private power,
 That those who like the bran might leave the flour
 He for himself, and not for others, chose,
 Nor would he be imposed on, nor impose ,
 But in their faces his devotion paid, 950
 And sacrifice with solemn rites was made,
 And sacred incense on his altars laid
 ' Besides these jolly birds, whose crops impure
 Repaid their commons with their salt manure,
 Another farm he had behind his house,
 Not overstocked, but barely for his use ,
 Wherein his poor domestic poultry¹ fed
 And from his pious hands received their bread
 Our pampered Pigeons with malignant eyes
 Beheld these inmates and their nurseries , 960
 Though hard their fare, at evening and at morn,
 A cruise of water and an ear of corn,
 Yet still they grudged that modicum, and thought
 A sheaf in every single grain was brought
 Fain would they filch that little food away,
 While unrestrained those happy gluttons prey

¹ The Church of Rome

And much they grieved to see so nigh their hall
 The bird that warned St Peter of his fall,
 That he should raise his mitred crest on high,
 And clap his wings and call his family 970
 To sacred rites, and vex the ethereal powers
 With midnight matins at uncivil hours,
 Nay more, his quiet neighbours should molest,
 Just in the sweetness of their morning rest
 'Beast of a bird, supinely when he might
 Lie snug and sleep, to rise above the light'
 What if his dull forefathers used that cry,
 Could he not let a bad example die?
 The world was fallen into an easier way,
 This age knew better than to fast and pray 980
 Good sense in sacred worship would appear
 So to begin as they might end the year
 Such feats in former times had wrought the falls
 Of crowing Chanticleers in cloistered walls
 Expelled for this and for their lands, they fled,
 And sister Partlet, with her hooded head,
 Was hooted hence, because she would not pray a-bed
 The way to win the restive world to God
 Was to lay by the disciplining rod,
 Unnatural fasts, and foreign forms of prayer 990
 Religion frights us with a mien severe
 'Tis prudence to reform her into ease,
 And put her in undress, to make her please,
 A lively faith will bear aloft the mind
 And leave the luggage of good works behind
 'Such doctrines in the Pigeon-house were taught,
 You need not ask how wondrously they wrought,
 But sure the common cry was all for these,
 Whose life and precepts both encouraged ease
 Yet fearing those alluring baits might fail, 1000
 And holy deeds o'er all their arts prevail
 (For vice, though frontless and of hardened face,
 Is daunted at the sight of awful grace),
 An hideous figure of their foes they drew,
 Nor lines, nor looks, nor shades, nor colours true,
 And this grotesque design exposed to public view
 One would have thought it an Egyptian piece,

With garden-gods, and barking deities,
 More thick than Ptolemy¹ has stuck the skies
 All so perverse a draught, so far unlike, 1010
 It was no libel where it meant to strike
 Yet still the daubing pleased, and great and small
 To view the monster crowded Pigeon-hall
 There Chanticleer was drawn upon his knees,
 Adoring shrines and stocks of sainted trees,
 And by him a misshapen ugly race,
 The curse of God was seen on every face
 No Holland emblem² could that malice mend,
 But still the worse the look the fitter for a fiend
 'The master of the farm, displeased to find 1020
 So much of rancour in so mild a kind,
 Inquired into the cause, and came to know
 The passive Church had struck the foremost blow,
 With groundless fears and jealousies posset,
 As if this troublesome intruding guest
 Would drive the birds of Venus³ from their nest
 A deed his inborn equity abhorred,
 But Interest will not trust, though God should plight his
 word
 'A law, the source of many future harms,
 Had banished all the poultry from the farms, 1030
 With loss of life, if any should be found
 To crow or peck on this forbidden ground
 That bloody statute chiefly was designed
 For Chanticleer the white, of clergy kind,
 But after-malice did not long forget
 The lay that wore the robe and coronet
 For them, for their inferiors and allies,
 Their foes a deadly Shibboleth devise
 By which unrighteously it was decreed,
 That none to trust or profit should succeed, 1040
 Who would not swallow first a poisonous wicked weed,

¹ A famous astronomer of Alexandria, second century A.D. The Ptolemaic system of astronomy (which regards the earth as the centre of the universe) was accepted until Copernicus refuted it at the beginning of the sixteenth century

² Dutch picture

³ Doves were sacred to Venus

Or that to which old Socrates was curst,¹
 Or henbane juice to swell them till they burst
 The patron, as in reason, thought it hard
 To see this inquisition in his yard,
 By which the Sovereign was of subjects' use debarred
 'All gentle means he tried, which might withdraw
 The effects of so unnatural a law
 But still the Dove-house obstinately stood
 Deaf to their own and to their neighbour's good, 1050
 And which was worse, if any worse could be,
 Repented of their boasted loyalty,
 Now made the champions of a cruel cause,
 And drunk with fumes of popular applause
 For those whom God to ruin has designed,
 He fits for fate, and first destroys their mind
 'New doubts indeed they daily strove to raise,
 Suggested dangers, interposed delays,
 And emissary Pigeons had in store,
 Such as the Meccan prophet² used of yore, 1060
 To whisper counsels in their patron's ear,
 And veiled their false advice with zealous fear
 The master smiled to see them work in vain,
 To wear him out and make an idle reign
 He saw, but suffered their protractive arts,
 And strove by mildness to reduce their hearts,
 But they abused that grace to make allies
 And fondly closed with former enemies,
 For fools are double fools, endeavouring to be wise
 'After a grave consult what course were best, 1070
 One, more mature in folly than the rest,
 Stood up, and told them with his head aside,
 That desperate cures must be to desperate ills ap-
 plied
 And therefore, since their main impending fear
 Was from the increasing race of Chanticleer,
 Some potent bird of prey they ought to find,
 A foe professed to him and all his kind

Socrates was poisoned with hemlock The reference is to the Test Act

² The enemies of Mahomet said that he trained a pigeon to pick grains of corn from his ear, and persuaded the people that the bird was a heavenly messenger which brought him counsel

Some haggared¹ Hawk, who had her eyry nigh,
 Well pounced to fasten, and well winged to fly ! 1079
 One they might trust their common wrongs to weak
 The Musquet² and the Coystrel³ were too weak,
 Too fierce the Falcon, but, above the rest,
 The noble Buzzard ever pleased me best
 Of small renown, 'tis true, for, not to lie,
 We call him but a Hawk by courtesy
 I know he haunts the Pigeon-house and farm,
 And more, in time of war has done us harm
 But all his hate on trivial points depends,
 Give up our forms, and we shall soon be friends
 For pigeons' flesh he seems not much to care, 1090
 Crammed chickens are a more delicious fare
 On this high potentate, without delay,
 I wish you would confer the sovereign sway,
 Petition him to accept the government,
 And let a splendid embassy be sent
 ' This pithy speech prevailed, and all agreed,
 Old enmities forgot, the Buzzard should succeed
 ' Their welcome suit was granted soon as heard,
 His lodgings furnished, and a train prepared, 1099
 With B's upon their breast, appointed for his guard
 He came, and crowned with great solemnity,
 God save king Buzzard ! was the general cry
 ' A portly prince, and goodly to the sight,
 He seemed a son of Anak for his height
 Like those whom stature did to crowns prefer,
 Black-browed and bluff, like Homer's Jupiter,
 Broad-backed and brawny built for love's delight,
 A prophet formed to make a female proselyte
 A theologue more by need than genial bent,
 By breeding sharp, by nature confident, 1110
 Interest in all his actions was discerned,
 More learned than honest, more a wit than learned,
 Or forced by fear or by his profit led,
 Or both conjoined, his native clime he fled
 But brought the virtues of his heaven along
 A fair behaviour, and a fluent tongue

¹ Wild² A male sparrow hawk³ The Lestrel-hawk

And yet with all his arts he could not thrive,
 The most unlucky parasite alive,
 Loud praises to prepare his paths he sent,
 And then himself pursued his compliment, 1120
 But by reverse of fortune chased away,
 His gifts no longer than their author stay,
 He shakes the dust against the ungrateful race,
 And leaves the stench of ordures in the place
 Oft has he flattered and blasphemed the same,
 For in his rage he spares no sovereign's name
 The hero and the tyrant change their style
 By the same measure that they frown or smile
 When well received by hospitable foes,
 The kindness he returns is to expose, 1130
 For courtesies, though undeserved and great,
 No gratitude in felon-minds beget,
 As tribute to his wit the churl receives the treat
 His praise of foes is venomously nice,
 So touched, it turns a virtue to a vice
A Greek, and bountiful, forewarns us twice
 Seven sacraments he wisely does disown,
 Because he knows Confession stands for one,
 Where sins to sacred silence are conveyed,
 And not for fear or love to be betrayed 1140
 But he, uncalled, his patron to control,
 Divulged the secret whispers of his soul¹,
 Stood forth the accusing Satan of his crimes,
 And offered to the Moloch² of the times
 Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,
 Invulnerable in his impudence,
 He dares the world and, eager of a name,
 He thrusts about and justles into fame
 Frontless and satire-proof, he scours the streets,
 And runs an Indian muck³ at all he meets 1150
 So fond of loud report, that not to miss

¹ Probably a reference to the evidence given by Burnet in 1675 before a committee of the House of Commons, when he revealed certain private conversations between the Duke of Lauderdale and himself

² God of the Ammonites, to whom human sacrifices were offered

³ 'To run amuck' is a phrase used by the Malays when a native intoxicates himself with arrack and rushes through the streets stabbing every one he meets

Of being known (his last and utmost bliss),
 He rather would be known for what he is
 'Such was and is the Captain of the Test,
 Though half his virtues are not here exprest,
 The modesty of fame conceals the rest
 The spleenful Pigeons never could create
 A prince more proper to revenge their hate,
 Indeed, more proper to revenge than save,
 A king whom in His wrath the Almighty gave ' 1160
 For all the grace the landlord had allowed
 But made the Buzzard and the Pigeons proud,
 Gave time to fix their friends and to seduce the crowd
 They long their fellow-subjects to enthrall,
 Their patron's promise into question call,
 And vainly think he meant to make them lords of all
 'False fears their leaders failed not to suggest,
 As if the Doves were to be dispossessed,
 Nor sighs nor groans nor goggling eyes did want,
 For now the Pigeons too had learned to cant 1170
 The house of prayer is stocked with large increase,
 Nor doors nor windows can contain the press
 For birds of every feather fill the abode,
 Even Atheists out of envy own a God,
 And, reeking from the stews, adulterers come,
 Like Goths and Vandals to demolish Rome
 That Conscience, which to all their crimes was mute,
 Now calls aloud and cries to persecute
 No rigour of the laws to be released,
 And much the less, because it was their Lord's request
 They thought it great their Sovereign to control, 1181
 And named their pride nobility of soul
 'Tis true, the Pigeons and their prince elect
 Were short of power their purpose to effect
 But with their quills did all the hurt they could
 And cuffed the tender chickens from their food
 And much the Buzzard in their cause did stir,
 Though naming not the patron, to infer,
 With all respect, he was a gross idolater
 'But when the imperial owner did espy 1190
 That thus they turned his grace to villany,
 Not suffering wrath to discompose his mind,

He strove a temper for the extremes to find,
 So to be just as he might still be kind
 Then, all maturely weighed, pronounced a doom
 Of sacred strength for every age to come
 By this the Doves their wealth and state possess,
 No rights infringed, but licence to oppress
 Such power have they as factious lawyers long
 To crowns ascribed, that kings can do no wrong 1200
 But since his own domestic birds have tried
 The dire effects of their destructive pride,
 He deems that proof a measure to the rest,
 Concluding well within his kingly breast
 His fowl of nature too unjustly were oppress
 He therefore makes all birds of every sect
 Free of his farm, with promise to respect
 Their several kinds alike, and equally protect
 His gracious edict the same franchise yields
 To all the wild increase of woods and fields 1210
 And who in rocks aloof, and who in steeples builds,
 To Crows the like impartial grace affords,
 And Choughs and Daws, and such republic birds,
 Secured with ample privilege to feed,
 Each has his district and his bounds decreed
 Combined in common interest with his own,
 But not to pass the Pigeons' Rubicon¹
 ' Here ends the reign of this pretended Dove,
 All prophecies accomplished from above,
 For Shiloh comes the sceptre to remove 1220
 Reduced from her imperial high abode,
 Like Dionysius to a private rod,²
 The passive Church, that with pretended grace
 Did her distinctive mark in duty place,
 Now touched, reviles her Maker to his face
 ' What after happened is not hard to guess,
 The small beginnings had a large increase,
 And arts and wealth succeed, the secret spoils of peace
 'Tis said the Doves repented, though too late
 Become the smiths of their own foolish fate 1230

¹ A small river which formed one of the northern boundaries of Italy
 Caesar declared war on the Republic by crossing it without permission

² Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, after his deposition became a school-
 master in Corinth

Nor did their owner hasten their ill hour,
 But, sunk in credit, they decreased in power
 Like snows in warmth that mildly pass away,
 Dissolving in the silence of decay

'The Buzzard, not content with equal place,
 Invites the feathered Nimrods of his race,
 To hide the thinness of their flock from sight,
 And all together make a seeming goodly flight
 But each have separate interests of their own ,
 Two Czars are one too many for a throne 1240
 Nor can the usurper long abstain from food ,
 Already he has tasted Pigeon's blood,
 And may be tempted to his former fare,
 When this indulgent lord shall late to Heaven repair
 Bare benting times¹ and moulting months may come,
 When lagging late they cannot reach their home ,
 Or rent in schism (for so their fate decrees)
 Like the tumultuous College of the Bees,
 They fight their quarrel, by themselves opprest ,
 The tyrant smiles below, and waits the falling feast '

Thus did the gentle Hind her fable end, 1251
 Nor would the Panther blame it nor commend ,
 But, with affected yawnings at the close,
 Seemed to require her natural repose ,
 For now the streaky light began to peep,
 And setting stars admonished both to sleep.
 The dame withdrew, and wishing to her guest
 The peace of Heaven, betook herself to rest
 Ten thousand angels on her slumbers wait
 With glorious visions of her future state 1260

¹ i.e. times when they are reduced to eating bent, that is, coarse grass

'The pigeon never knoweth woe

Until she doth a benting go'

(*Johnson's Dictionary*, Latham's edition)

ODE TO MRS. KILLIGREW

1686

*To the Pious Memory of the accomplished young lady,
Mrs Anne Killigrew, excellent in the two sister arts
of Poesy and Painting*

THOU youngest virgin-daughter of the skies,
Made in the last promotion of the blest,
Whose palms, new pluck'd from Paradise,
In spreading branches more sublimely rise,
Rich with immortal green above the rest
Whether, adopted to some neighb'ring star,
Thou roll'st above us, in thy wandering race,
O! in procession fix'd and regular,
Mov'st with the heaven's majestic pace,
Or, call'd to more superior bliss, 10
Thou tread'st with seraphims the vast abyss
Whatever happy region be thy place,
Cease thy celestial song a little space,
Thou wilt have time enough for hymns divine,
Since Heaven's eternal year is thine
Hear, then, a mortal Muse thy praise rehearse,
In no ignoble verse,
But such as thy own voice did practise here,
When thy first-fruits of Poesy were given,
To make thyself a welcome inmate there, 20
While yet a young probationer,
And candidate of heaven

If by traduction came thy mind,
Our wonder is the less, to find
A soul so charming from a stock so good,
Thy father was transfused into thy blood
So wert thou born into a tuneful strain,
An early, rich, and inexhausted vein
But if thy pre-existing soul
Was form'd at first with myriads more, 30

It did through all the mighty poets roll
 Who Greek or Latin laurels wore,
 And was that Sappho¹ last, which once it was before
 If so, then cease thy flight, O heaven-born mind !
 Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore
 Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find,
 Than was the beauteous frame she left behind
 Return, to fill or mend the quire of thy celestial kind

May we presume to say, that, at thy birth,
 New joy was sprung in heaven as well as here on earth
 For sure the milder planets did combine 41
 On thy auspicious horoscope to shine,²
 And even the most malicious were in trine
 Thy brother-angels at thy birth
 Strung each his lyre, and tuned it high,
 That all the people of the sky
 Might know a poetess was born on earth ,
 And then, if ever, mortal ears
 Had heard the music of the spheres
 And if no clustering swarm of bees 50
 On thy sweet mouth distill'd their golden dew,³
 'Twas that such vulgar miracles
 Heaven had not leisure to renew
 For all the blest fraternity of love
 Solemnized there thy birth, and kept thy holiday above

O gracious God ! how far have we
 Profaned thy heavenly gift of Poesy !
 Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
 Debased to each obscene and impious use,
 Whose harmony was first ordain'd above, 60
 For tongues of angels and for hymns of love !
 O wretched we ! why were we hurried down
 This lubrique⁴ and adulterate age
 (Nay, added fat pollutions of our own),
 To increase the streaming ordures of the stage ?

¹ Lyric poetess of Lesbos, seventh century B C

² Cf p 64, note 2

³ According to the old legend a swarm of bees settled on Pindar's lips while he slept, and to this miracle he owed his poetic inspiration

⁴ Wanton

What can we say to excuse our second fall ?
 Let this thy Vestal¹, Heaven, atone for all '
 Her Arethusian² stream remains unsoil'd,
 Unmix'd with foreign filth, and undefiled,
 Her wit was more than man, her innocence a child 70

Art she had none, yet wanted none,
 For Nature did that want supply
 So rich, in treasures of her own,
 She might our boasted stores defy
 Such noble vigour did her verse adorn,
 That it seem'd borrow'd, where 'twas only born
 Her morals, too, were in her bosom bred,
 By great examples daily fed,
 What in the best of books, her father's life, she read
 And to be read herself she need not fear, 80
 Each test, and every light, her Muse will bear,
 Though Epictetus³ with his lamp were there
 Even love (for love sometimes her Muse exprest)
 Was but a lambent flame which play'd about her breast,
 Light as the vapours of a morning dream,
 So cold herself, whilst she such warmth exprest,
 'Twas Cupid bathing in Diana's stream

Now all those charms, that blooming grace,
 The well-proportion'd shape, and beauteous face,
 Shall never more be seen by mortal eyes, 90
 In earth the much-lamented virgin lies
 Not wit, nor piety could fate prevent,
 Nor was the cruel destiny content
 To finish all the murder at a blow,
 To sweep at once her life and beauty too,
 But, like a harden'd felon, took a pride
 To work more mischievously slow,
 And plunder'd first, and then destroy'd

¹ The Vestal Virgins were priestesses of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth

² Arethusa, a nymph of Sicily, being pursued by her lover Alpheus, prayed to Artemis for help, and was changed into a fountain whose waters always remained sweet, and refused to mingle with the sea into which they flowed See Shelley's poem, *Arethusa*

³ An eminent Stoic philosopher of the first century A D

O double sacrilege on things divine,
 To rob the relic, and deface the shrine ' 100
 But thus Orinda died

Heaven, by the same disease did both translate,
 As equal were their souls, so equal was their fate

Meantime, her warlike brother on the seas
 His waving streamers to the winds displays,
 And vows for his return, with vain devotion, pays
 Ah, generous youth ' that wish forbear,
 The winds too soon will waft thee here '
 Slack all thy sails, and fear to come,
 Alas, thou know'st not, thou art wreck'd at home '
 No more shalt thou behold thy sister's face, 111
 Thou hast already had her last embrace
 But look aloft, and if thou kenn'st from far,
 Among the Pleiads a new kindled star,
 If any sparkles than the rest more bright,
 'Tis she that shines in that propitious light

When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
 To raise the nations under ground,
 When, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat,¹
 The judging God shall close the book of Fate, 120
 And there the last assizes keep
 For those who wake and those who sleep,
 When rattling bones together fly
 From the four corners of the sky,
 When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
 Those clothed with flesh, and life inspires the dead,
 The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
 And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
 For they are cover'd with the lightest ground,
 And straight, with inborn vigour, on the wing, 130
 Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing,
 There thou, sweet Saint, before the quire shall go,
 As harbinger of Heaven, the way to show,
 The way which thou so well hast learn'd below

¹ Joel iii 2

ALEXANDER'S FEAST, OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

1697

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son¹—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne,
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crown'd),
The lovely Thais² by his side
Sate like a blooming eastern bride
In flower of youth and beauty's pride — 10
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair!

Timotheus³ placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre
The trembling notes ascend the sky
And heavenly joys inspire 20
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god⁴,
Sublime on radiant spurs he rode
When he to fair Olympia prest,
And while he sought her snowy breast,

¹ Alexander was the son of Philip of Macedon

² An Athenian famous for her beauty, and beloved by Alexander

³ A famous Athenian poet and musician who flourished in the time of Philip

⁴ Jupiter is fabled to have wooed Olympia in the form of a dragon

Then round her slender waist he curl'd,
 And stamp'd an image of himself, a sovereign of the world
 —The listening crowd admire the lofty sound ' 30
 A present deity ' they shout around
 A present deity ' the vaulted roofs rebound '
 With ravish'd ears
 The monarch hears,
 Assumes the god ,
 Affects to nod
 And seems to shake the spheres

The praise of Bacchus¹ then the sweet musician sung,
 Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young
 The jolly god in triumph comes ' 40
 Sound the trumpets, beat the drums '
 Flush'd with a purple grace
 He shows his honest face
 Now give the hautboys² breath , he comes, he comes '
 Bacchus, ever fair and young,
 Drinking joys did first ordain ,
 Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
 Drinking is the soldier's pleasure
 Rich the treasure,
 Sweet the pleasure, 50
 Sweet is pleasure after pain

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain ,
 Fought all his battles o'er again,
 And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain '
 The master saw the madness rise,
 His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes ,
 And while he Heaven and Earth defied
 Changed his hand and check'd his pride
 He chose a mournful Muse
 Soft pity to infuse 60
 He sung Darius great and good,
 By too severe a fate
 Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
 Fallen from his high estate,
 And weltering in his blood ,

¹ The god of wine and revelry

Wind-instruments

Deserted, at his utmost need,
 By those his former bounty fed,
 On the bare earth exposed he lies
 With not a friend to close his eyes
 —With downcast looks the joyless victor sate, 70
 Revolving in his alter'd soul
 The various turns of Chance below,
 And now and then a sigh he stole,
 And tears began to flow

The mighty master smiled to see
 That love was in the next degree,
 'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
 For pity melts the mind to love
 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures ¹
 Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures 80
 War, he sung, is toil and trouble,
 Honour but an empty bubble,
 Never ending, still beginning,
 Fighting still, and still destroying,
 If the world be worth thy winning
 Think, O think, it worth enjoying
 Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
 Take the good the gods provide thee '
 —The many rend the skies with loud applause,
 So Love was crown'd, but Music won the cause 90
 The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
 Gazed on the fair
 Who caused his care,

¹ Greek music was based not on our modern scale but on a system of 'modes', i.e. lengths of eight notes such as could be represented by us on the white notes of a pianoforte. The seven modes, as adopted by the Mediaeval Church, were the Dorian (D to D), the Phrygian (E to E), the Lydian (F to F), the Mixolydian (G to G), the Aeolian (A to A), the Locrian (B to B), and the Ionian (C to C). Of these the Locrian was never used in mediaeval music, and the Lydian was regarded as specially soft and luxurious in character. For the original nomenclature see *Riemann's Dictionary of Music*, s.v. Greek Music.

Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro* —

'And ever against eating cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
 Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce
 In notes with many a winding bout
 Of linked sweetness long drawn out'

And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
 Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again
 At length with love and wine at once opprest
 The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast

Now strike the golden lyre again
 A louder yet, and yet a louder strain '
 Break his bands of sleep asunder 100
 And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder
 Hark, hark ' the horrid sound
 Has raised up his head
 As awaked from the dead
 And amazed he stares around
 Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries,
 See the Furies¹ arise '
 See the snakes that they rear
 How they hiss in their hair,
 And the sparkles that flash from their eyes 110
 Behold a ghastly band,
 Each a torch in his hand '
 Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain
 And unburied remain
 Inglorious on the plain
 Give the vengeance due
 To the valiant crew '
 Behold how they toss their torches on high,
 How they point to the Persian abodes
 And glittering temples of their hostile gods 120
 —The princes applaud with a furious joy
 And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy,
 Thais led the way
 To light him to his prey,
 And like another Helen, fired another Troy!²

—Thus, long ago,
 Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
 While organs yet were mute,
 Timotheus, to his breathing flute

¹ The Furies (Erinyes, or Eumenides) were the goddesses who avenged crime, and especially murder. They were represented with snakes intertwined in their hair.

² The beauty of Helen brought about the war between Greece and Troy which ended in the destruction of Troy.

And sounding lyre
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire
At last divine Cecilia¹ came,
Inventress of the vocal frame,
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before
—Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown,
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down ' 130

FAIREST ISLE

FAIREST isle, all isles excelling,
Seat of pleasures and of loves
Venus here will choose her dwelling,
And forsake her Cyprian groves

Cupid from his favourite nation,
Care and envy will remove,
Jealousy, that poisons passion,
And despair, that dies for love

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,
Sighs, that blow the fire of love,
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,
Shall be all the pains you prove

Every swain shall pay his duty,
Grateful every nymph shall prove,
And as these excel in beauty,
Those shall be renown'd for love

¹ St Cecilia is said to have invented the organ

PHILLIS

WHEREVER I am, and whatever I do,
My Phillis is still in my mind,
When angry, I mean not to Phillis to go,
My feet, of themselves, the way find
Unknown to myself I am just at her door,
And, when I would rail, I can bring out no more,
Than, Phillis, too fair and unkind '

When Phillis I see, my heart bounds in my breast,
But asleep, or awake, I am never at rest,
When from my eyes Phillis is gone
Sometimes a sad dream does delude my sad mind
But, alas ' when I wake, and no Phillis I find,
How I sigh to myself all alone '

Should a king be my rival in her I adore,
He should offer his treasure in vain
Oh, let me alone to be happy and poor,
And give me my Phillis again '
Let Phillis be mine, and but ever be kind,
I could to a desert with her be confined,
And envy no monarch his reign

Alas ' I discover too much of my love,
And she too well knows her own power '
She makes me each day a new martyrdom prove,
And makes me grow jealous each hour
But let her each minute torment my poor mind,
I had rather love Phillis, both false and unkind,
Than ever be freed from her power

TO A FAIR YOUNG LADY

GOING OUT OF THE TOWN IN THE SPRING

ASK not the cause, why sullen Spring
 So long delays her flowers to bear ,
 Why warbling birds forget to sing,
 And winter storms invert the year
 Chloris is gone, and fate provides
 To make it Spring, where she resides

Chloris is gone, the cruel fair ,
 She cast not back a pitying eye
 But left her lover in despair,
 To sigh, to languish, and to die
 Ah, how can those fair eyes endure
 To give the wounds they will not cure '

Great god of love, why hast thou made
 A face that can all hearts command,
 That all religions can invade,
 And change the laws of every land ?
 Where thou hadst placed such power before
 Thou shouldst have made her mercy more

When Chloris to the temple comes,
 Adoring crowds before her fall ,
 She can restore the dead from tombs,
 And every life but mine recall
 I only am by Love design'd
 To be the victim for mankind

EXTRACTS FROM PLAYS

CONQUEST OF GRANADA

1672

SECOND PART ACT I SCENE I

KING FERDINAND, QUEEN ISABELLA, ABDALLA, DUKE OF
ARCOS *with OZMYN and BENZAYDA, prisoners*

D Arcos The master of Alcantara is slain,
But he who slew him, here before you stands
It is the Moor whom you behold in bands

K Ferd A braver man I had not in my host,
His murderer shall not long his conquest boast
But, Duke of Arcos, say how was he slain?

D Arcos Our soldiers marched together on the plain
We two rode on, and left them far behind,
Till, coming where we found the valley wind,
We saw these Moors, who, swiftly as they could,
Ran on, to gain the covert of a wood
Thus we observed, and having crossed their way,
The lady, out of breath, was forced to stay
The man then stood, and straight his falchion drew,
Then told us we in vain did those pursue
Whom their ill-fortune to despair did drive
And yet whom we should never take alive
Neglecting this, the master straight spurred on,
But the active Moor his horse's shock did shun
And, ere his rider from his reach could go,
Finished the combat with one deadly blow
I to revenge my friend prepared to fight
But now our foremost men were come in sight,
Who soon would have dispatched him on the place
Had I not saved him from a death so base,
And brought him to attend your royal doom

K Ferd A manly face, and in his age's bloom,
But, to content the soldiers, he must die
Go, see him executed instantly

Q Isabel Stay, I would learn his name before he go
You, Prince Abdalla, may the prisoner know

Abdall Ozmyn's his name, and he deserves his fate,
His father heads the faction which I hate
But much I wonder, that with him I see
The daughter of his mortal enemy

Benz 'Tis true by Ozmyn's sword my brother fell,
But 'twas a death he merited too well
I know a sister should excuse his fault,
But you know too, that Ozmyn's death he sought

Abdall Our prophet has declared by the event
That Ozmyn is reserved for punishment,
For when he thought his guilt from danger clear,
He, by new crimes, is brought to suffer here

Benz In love, or pity, if a crime you find,
We two have sinned above all human kind

Ozm Heaven in my punishment has done a grace
I could not suffer in a better place
That I should die by Christians it thought good,
To save your father's guilt, who sought my blood

Benz Fate aims so many blows to make us fall
That 'tis in vain to think to ward them all
And where misfortunes great and many are
Life grows a burden hardly worth our care

Ozm I cast it from me like a garment torn
Ragged, and too indecent to be worn
Besides, there is contagion in my fate,
It makes your life too much unfortunate —
But since her faults are not allied to mine
In her protection let your favour shine
To you, great queen, I make this last request
(Since pity dwells in every royal breast),
Safe in your care her life and honour be
It is a dying lover's legacy

Benz Cease, Ozmyn, cease so vain a suit to move
I did not give you on these terms my love
Leave me the care of me, for when you go,
My love will soon instruct me what to do

Q Isabel Permit me, sir, these lovers' doom to give
My sentence is, they shall together live,
The courts of kings
To all distressed should sanctuaries be,
But most to lovers in adversity

ALL FOR LOVE

1678

ACT V SCENE I

VENTIDIUS and ANTONY

Vent. Would you be taken ?

Ant Yes, I would be taken ,
But as a Roman ought,—dead, my Ventidius
For I'll convey my soul from Caesar's reach
And lay down life myself 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey
We two have kept its homage in suspense
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod
Till it was dented inwards Let him walk
Alone upon't I am weary of my part
My torch is out, and the world stands before me
Like a black desert at the approach of night
I'll lay me down and stray no farther on

Vent I could be grieved,
But that I'll not outlive you Choose your death,
For I have seen him in such various shapes
I care not which I take I'm only troubled
The life I bear is worn to such a rag
'Tis scarce worth giving I could wish indeed
We threw it from us with a better grace ,
That like two lions taken in the toils
We might at last thrust out our paws and wound
The hunters that enclose us

Ant I have thought on it
Ventidius, you must live

Vent I must not, sir

Ant Wilt thou not live to speak some good of me ?
To stand by my fair fame, and guard the approaches
From the ill tongues of me ?

Vent Who shall guard mine
For living after you ?

Ant Say, I command it

Vent If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves
And need no living witness

Ant Thou hast loved me,
And fain would I reward thee I must die,
Kill me, and take the merit of my death
To make thee friends with Caesar

Vent Thank your kindness
You said I loved you, and in recompense
You bid me turn a traitor —Did I think
You would have used me thus? that I should die
With a hard thought of you?

Ant Forgive me, Roman
Since I heard of Cleopatra's death
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out
I've thought better Do not deny me twice

Vent By heaven, I will not,
Let it not be to outlive you

Ant Kill me first,
And then die thou, for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend before thyself

Vent Give me your hand
We soon shall meet again Now farewell, emperor!
[Embrace]

Methinks that word's too cold to be my last
Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
That's all

I will not make a business of a trifle
And yet I cannot look on you and kill you
Pray turn your face

Ant I do Strike home, be sure

Vent Home as my sword will reach [Kills himself]

Ant Oh, thou mistak'st,
That wound was none of thine Give it me back,
Thou robb'st me of my death

Vent I do indeed,
But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
If that may plead my pardon —And you gods
Forgive me if you will, for I die perjured
Rather than kill my friend [Dies]

LITERARY CRITICISM

THE AUTHOR'S APOLOGY FOR HEROIC POETRY

1677

IN the first place, I must take leave to tell them, that they wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault. Criticism, as it was first instituted by Aristotle, was meant a standard of judging well, the chiefest part of which is, to observe those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader. If the design, the conduct, the thoughts, and the expressions of a poem, be generally such as proceed from a true genius of Poetry, the critic ought to pass his judgement in favour of the author. 'Tis malicious and unmanly to snarl at the little lapses of a pen, from which Virgil himself stands not exempted. Horace acknowledges, that honest Homer nods sometimes: he is not equally awake in every line, but he leaves it also as a standing measure for our judgements,

*Non, ubi plura nitent in carmine, paucis
Offendi maculis, quas aut incurva fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura*¹

And Longinus², who was undoubtedly, after Aristotle, the greatest critic amongst the Greeks, in his twenty-seventh chapter ΠΕΡΙ ΨΟΥΣ,³ has judiciously preferred the sublime genius that sometimes errs, to the middling or indifferent one, which makes few faults, but seldom or never rises to any excellence. He compares the first

¹ 'When the greater part of a poem is brilliant not to be offended at a few blunders which have either been committed by carelessness or held by human frailty in too little regard' Hor. *Art Poet* 351-3

² A D 213(?) - 273(?)

³ On the Sublime

to a man of large possessions, who has not leisure to consider of every slight expense, will not debase himself to the management of every trifle particular sums are not laid out, or spared, to the greatest advantage in his economy, but are sometimes suffered to run to waste, while he is only careful of the main. On the other side, he likens the mediocrity of wit to one of a mean fortune, who manages his store with extreme frugality, or rather parsimony, but who, with fear of running into profuseness, never arrives to the magnificence of living. This kind of genius writes indeed correctly. A wary man he is in grammar, very nice as to solecism or barbarism, judges to a hair of little decencies, knows better than any man what is not to be written, and never hazards himself so far as to fall, but plods on deliberately, and, as a grave man ought, is sure to put his staff before him, in short, he sets his heart upon it, and with wonderful care makes his business sure, that is, in plain English, neither to be blamed nor praised—I could, says my author, find out some blemishes in Homer, and am perhaps as naturally inclined to be disgusted at a fault as another man, but, after all, to speak impartially, his failings are such, as are only marks of human frailty they are little mistakes, or rather negligences, which have escaped his pen in the fervour of his writing, the sublimity of his spirit carries it with me against his carelessness, and though Apollonius¹ his *Argonauts*, and Theocritus² his *Erdullia*, are more free from errors, there is not any man of so false a judgement, who would choose rather to have been Apollonius or Theocritus than Homer.

'Tis worth our consideration a little, to examine how much these hypercritics of English poetry differ from the opinion of the Greek and Latin judges of antiquity, from the Italians and French, who have succeeded them, and, indeed, from the general taste and approbation of all ages. Heroic Poetry, which they condemn, has ever been esteemed, and ever will be, the greatest work of

¹ Apollonius of Rhodes (circa 200 B C) an Alexandrine poet who wrote an epic on the Argonauts

² A Greek poet of Syracuse, the originator of pastoral poetry. He lived in the third century B C

human nature in that rank has Aristotle placed it, and Longinus is so full of the like expressions, that he abundantly confirms the other's testimony. Horace as plainly delivers his opinion, and particularly praises Homer in these verses—

*Trojan Belli scriptorem, maxime Lolli,
Dum tu declamas Romae, Praeneste relegi
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenus ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit*¹

And in another place, modestly excluding himself from the number of poets, because he only writ odes and satires, he tells you a poet is such an one,

*cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum*²

Quotations are superfluous in an established truth, otherwise I could reckon up, amongst the moderns, all the Italian commentators on Aristotle's book of poetry, and amongst the French, the greatest of this age, Boileau³ and Rapin⁴, the latter of which is alone sufficient, were all other critics lost, to teach anew the rules of writing. Any man, who will seriously consider the nature of an Epic Poem, how it agrees with that of Poetry in general, which is to instruct and to delight, what actions it describes, and what persons they are chiefly whom it informs, will find it a work which indeed is full of difficulty in the attempt, but admirable when it is well performed. I write not this with the least intention to undervalue the other parts of poetry for Comedy is both excellently instructive, and extremely pleasant, satire lashes vice into reformation,

¹ 'While, most excellent Lollius, you are reciting the poet of the Trojan war at Rome, I have been reading him over again at Praeneste he tells us better and more fully than Chrysippus and Crantor what is fair, what is ugly, what is useful or the reverse'

Crantor the Platonist and Chrysippus the Stoic were two philosophers much studied at Rome

² 'Whose mind has the divine fire and whose voice is attuned to lofty eloquence'

³ 1636-1711 Published *L'art Poétique* in 1673 He also translated Longinus

⁴ 1621-87 French poet and critic

and humour represents folly so as to render it ridiculous. Many of our present writers are eminent in both these kinds, and, particularly, the author of the *Plain Dealer*,¹ whom I am proud to call my friend, has obliged all honest and virtuous men, by one of the most bold, most general, and most useful satires, which has ever been presented on the English theatre. I do not dispute the preference of Tragedy, let every man enjoy his taste; but 'tis unjust, that they, who have not the least notion of heroic writing, should therefore condemn the pleasure which others receive from it, because they cannot comprehend it. Let them please their appetites in eating what they like, but let them not force their dish on all the table. They, who would combat general authority with particular opinion, must first establish themselves a reputation of understanding better than other men. Are all the flights of Heroic Poetry to be concluded bombast, unnatural, and mere madness, because they are not affected with their excellencies? It is just as reasonable as to conclude there is no day, because a blind man cannot distinguish of light and colours. Ought they not rather, in modesty, to doubt of their own judgements, when they think this or that expression in Homer, Virgil, Tasso², or Milton's *Paradise*, to be too far strained, than positively to conclude that 'tis all fustian, and mere nonsense? 'Tis true, there are limits to be set betwixt the boldness and rashness of a poet, but he must understand those limits who pretends to judge as well as he who undertakes to write; and he who has no liking to the whole, ought, in reason, to be excluded from censuring the parts. He must be a lawyer before he mounts the tribunal, and the judicature of one court, too, does not qualify a man to preside in another. He may be an excellent pleader in the Chancery³, who is not fit to rule the Common Pleas⁴. But I will presume for once to tell them, that the boldest strokes of

¹ Wycherley. Acted 1674.

1544-95. His chief work is the romantic epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*.

³ At that time the highest court of judicature after the House of Lords, now a division of the High Court of Justice.

⁴ Formerly one of the superior courts of common law, now merged in the Court of King's Bench.

poetry, when they are managed artfully, are those which most delight the reader

Virgil and Horace, the severest writers of the severest age, have made frequent use of the hardest metaphors, and of the strongest hyperboles, and in this case the best authority is the best argument, for generally to have pleased, and through all ages, must bear the force of universal tradition. And if you would appeal from thence to right reason, you will gain no more by it in effect, than, first, to set up your reason against those authors, and, secondly, against all those who have admired them. You must prove, why that ought not to have pleased, which has pleased the most learned, and the most judicious, and, to be thought knowing, you must first put the fool upon all mankind. If you can enter more deeply, than they have done, into the causes and resorts of that which moves pleasure in a reader, the field is open, you may be heard. but those springs of human nature are not so easily discovered by every superficial judge. it requires Philosophy, as well as Poetry, to sound the depth of all the passions, what they are in themselves, and how they are to be provoked. and in this science the best poets have excelled. Aristotle raised the fabric of his *Poetry* from observation of those things in which Euripides¹, Sophocles², and Aeschylus³ pleased. he considered how they raised the passions, and thence has drawn rules for our imitation. From hence have sprung the tropes and figures, for which they wanted a name, who first practised them, and succeeded in them. Thus I grant you, that the knowledge of Nature was the original rule, and that all poets ought to study her, as well as Aristotle and Horace, her interpreters. But then this also undeniably follows, that those things, which delight all ages, must have been an imitation of Nature, which is all I contend

¹ B C 480-406

² B C 495(?) - 405(?)

³ B C 525-456 Cf p 121

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

1679

PREFACE

CONTAINING THE GROUNDS OF CRITICISM IN TRAGEDY

THE poet Aeschylus was held in the same veneration by the Athenians of after ages as Shakespeare is by us, and Longinus has judged, in favour of him, that he had a noble boldness of expression, and that his imaginations were lofty and heroic, but, on the other side, Quintilian¹ affirms that he was daring to extravagance 'Tis certain that he affected pompous words, and that his sense too often was obscured by figures, notwithstanding these imperfections, the value of his writings after his decease was such, that his countrymen ordained an equal reward to those poets who could alter his plays to be acted on the theatre, with those whose productions were wholly new, and of their own The case is not the same in England, though the difficulties of altering are greater, and our reverence for Shakespeare much more just, than that of the Grecians for Aeschylus In the age of that poet, the Greek tongue was arrived to its full perfection, they had then amongst them an exact standard of writing and of speaking the English language is not capable of such a certainty, and we are at present so far from it, that we are wanting in the very foundation of it, a perfect grammar Yet it must be allowed to the present age, that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words, and more of his phrases, are scarce intelligible And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse, and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure 'Tis true, that in his latter plays he had worn off somewhat of the rust, but the tragedy which I have undertaken to correct was in all probability one of his first endeavours on the stage

¹ A D 35-95 Author of a famous treatise on Oratory

The original story was written by one Lollius¹, a Lombard, in Latin verse, and translated by Chaucer into English, intended, I suppose, a satire on the inconstancy of women. I find nothing of it among the Ancients, not so much as the name Cressida once mentioned Shakespeare (as I hunted), in the apprenticeship of his writing, modelled it into that play, which is now called by the name of *Troilus and Cressida*, but so lamely is it left to us, that it is not divided into acts, which fault I ascribe to the actors who printed it after Shakespeare's death, and that too so carelessly, that a more uncorrect copy I never saw. For the play itself, the author seems to have begun it with some fire, the characters of Pandarus and Thersites are promising enough, but as if he grew weary of his task, after an entrance or two, he lets them fall, and the latter part of the tragedy is nothing but a confusion of drums and trumpets, excursions and alarms. The chief persons, who give name to the tragedy, are left alive, Cressida is false, and is not punished. Yet, after all, because the play was Shakespeare's, and that there appeared in some places of it the admirable genius of the author, I undertook to remove that heap of rubbish under which many excellent thoughts lay wholly buried. Accordingly, I new-modelled the plot, threw out many unnecessary persons, improved those characters which were begun and left unfinished, as Hector, Troilus, Pandarus, and Thersites, and added that of Andromache. After this, I made, with no small trouble, an order and connexion of all the scenes, removing them from the places where they were artificially set, and, though it was impossible to keep them all unbroken, because the scene must be sometimes in the city and sometimes in the camp, yet I have so ordered them, that there is a coherence of them with one another, and a dependence on the main design, no leaping from Troy to the Grecian tents, and thence back again, in the same act, but a due proportion of time-allowed for every motion. I need not say that I have refined his language, which before was obsolete, but I am willing to

¹ An unknown mediæval author from whom Chaucer professes to have taken the story of Troilus and Cressida. See Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer*, vol. II, p. 405, &c

acknowledge, that as I have often drawn his English nearer to our times, so I have sometimes conformed my own to his, and consequently, the language is not altogether so pure as it is significant. The scenes of Pandarus and Cressida, of Troilus and Pandarus, of Andromache with Hector and the Trojans, in the second act, are wholly new, together with that of Nestor and Ulysses with Thersites, and that of Thersites with Ajax and Achilles. I will not wear my reader with the scenes which are added of Pandarus and the lovers, in the third, and those of Thersites, which are wholly altered, but I cannot omit the last scene in it, which is almost half the act, betwixt Troilus and Hector. The occasion of raising it was hinted to me by Mr Betterton¹, the contrivance and working of it was my own. They who think to do me an injury by saying that it is an imitation of the scene betwixt Brutus and Cassius², do me an honour by supposing I could imitate the incomparable Shakespeare, but let me add, that if Shakespeare's scene, or the faulty copy of it in Amintor and Melantius³, had never been, yet Euripides had furnished me with an excellent example in his *Iphigenia*, between Agamemnon and Menelaus, and from thence, indeed, the last turn of it is borrowed. The occasion which Shakespeare, Euripides, and Fletcher, have all taken, is the same, grounded upon friendship, and the quarrel of two virtuous men, raised by natural degrees to the extremity of passion, is conducted in all three, to the declination of the same passion, and concludes with a warm renewing of their friendship. But the particular groundwork which Shakespeare has taken is incomparably the best, because he has not only chosen two of the greatest heroes of their age, but has likewise interested the liberty of Rome, and their own honours, who were the redeemers of it, in this debate. And if he has made Brutus, who was naturally a patient man, to fly into excess at first, let it be remembered in his defence, that, just before, he has received the news of Portia's death, whom the poet, on purpose neglecting a little chronology, supposes to

¹ 1635(?)–1710. One of the most noted actors of his day.
Julius Caesar, Act IV Sc. iii.

² Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, Act III Sc. ii.

have died before Brutus, only to give him an occasion of being more easily exasperated. Add to this, that the injury he had received from Cassius had long been brooding in his mind, and that a melancholy man, upon consideration of an affront, especially from a friend, would be more eager in his passion than he who had given it, though naturally more choleric. Euripides, whom I have followed, has raised the quarrel betwixt two brothers, who were friends. The foundation of the scene was this: the Grecians were windbound at the port of Aulis, and the oracle had said that they could not sail, unless Agamemnon delivered up his daughter to be sacrificed. He refuses, his brother Menelaus urges the public safety, the father defends himself by arguments of natural affection, and hereupon they quarrel. Agamemnon is at last convinced, and promises to deliver up Iphigenia, but so passionately laments his loss, that Menelaus is grieved to have been the occasion of it, and, by a return of kindness, offers to intercede for him with the Grecians, that his daughter might not be sacrificed. But my friend Mr Rymer¹ has so largely, and with so much judgement, described this scene, in comparing it with that of Melantius and Amintor, that it is superfluous to say more of it, I only named the heads of it, that any reasonable man might judge it was from thence I modelled my scene betwixt Troilus and Hector. I will conclude my reflections on it, with a passage of Longinus, concerning Plato's imitation of Homer: 'We ought not to regard a good imitation as a theft, but as a beautiful idea of him who undertakes to imitate, by forming himself on the invention and the work of another man, for he enters into the lists like a new wrestler, to dispute the prize with the former champion. This sort of emulation, says Hesiod², is honourable, *Ἀγαθὴ δ' ἐπὶ ἐστὶ βροτοῖσιν*³—when we combat for victory with a hero, and are not without glory even in our overthrow. Those great men, whom we propose to ourselves as patterns of our imitation, serve us as a torch, which is lifted up before

¹ 1641-1713. Author, critic, and archaeologist, noted for his savage attacks on Shakespeare

² A Greek didactic poet (circa 800 B.C.)

³ 'Strife is good for mortals'

us, to enlighten our passage, and often elevate our thoughts as high as the conception we have of our author's genius'

I have been so tedious in three acts, that I shall contract myself in the two last. The beginning scenes of the fourth act are either added or changed wholly by me, the middle of it is Shakespeare altered, and mingled with my own, three or four of the last scenes are altogether new. And the whole fifth act, both the plot and the writing, are my own additions.

But having written so much for imitation of what is excellent, in that part of the Preface which related only to myself, methinks it would neither be unprofitable nor unpleasant to inquire how far we ought to imitate our own poets, Shakespeare and Fletcher, in their tragedies, and this will occasion another inquiry, how those two writers differ between themselves. but since neither of these questions can be solved, unless some measures be first taken by which we may be enabled to judge truly of their writings, I shall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to discover the grounds and reason of all criticism, applying them in this place only to Tragedy. Aristotle with his interpreters, and Horace, and Longinus, are the authors to whom I owe my lights, and what part soever of my own plays, or of this, which no mending could make regular, shall fall under the condemnation of such judges, it would be impudence in me to defend. I think it no shame to retract my errors, and am well pleased to suffer in the cause, if the art may be improved at my expense. I therefore proceed to

THE GROUNDS OF CRITICISM IN TRAGEDY

Tragedy is thus defined by Aristotle (omitting what I thought unnecessary in his definition) It is an imitation of one entire, great, and probable action, not told, but represented, which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds. More largely thus. Tragedy describes or paints an action, which action must have all the proprieties above named. First, it must be one or single, that is, it must not be a history of one man's life, suppose of Alexander the Great,

or Julius Caesar, but one single action of theirs. This condemns all Shakespeare's historical plays, which are rather chronicles represented, than tragedies, and all double action of plays. As, to avoid a satire upon others, I will make bold with my own *Marriage à la Mode*, where there are manifestly two actions, not depending on one another, but in *Oedipus*¹ there cannot properly be said to be two actions, because the love of Adrastus and Eurydice has a necessary dependency on the principal design into which it is woven. The natural reason of this rule is plain, for two different independent actions distract the attention and concernment of the audience, and consequently destroy the intention of the poet, if his business be to move terror and pity, and one of his actions be comical, the other tragical, the former will divert the people, and utterly make void his greater purpose. Therefore, as in perspective, so in Tragedy, there must be a point of sight in which all the lines terminate, otherwise the eye wanders, and the work is false. This was the practice of the Grecian stage. But Terence² made an innovation in the Roman all his plays have double actions, for it was his custom to translate two Greek comedies, and to weave them into one of his, yet so, that both their actions were comical, and one was principal, the other but secondary or subservient. And this has obtained on the English stage, to give us the pleasure of variety.

As the action ought to be one, it ought, as such, to have order in it, that is, to have a natural beginning, a middle, and an end. A natural beginning, says Aristotle, is that which could not necessarily have been placed after another thing, and so of the rest. This consideration will arraign all plays after the new model of Spanish plots, where accident is heaped upon accident, and that which is first might as reasonably be last, an inconvenience not to be remedied, but by making one accident naturally produce another, otherwise it is a farce and not a play. Of this nature is the *Slighted Maid*³, where there is no

¹ A tragedy by Dryden and Lee, modelled, as Dryden says, on Sophocles, but with the addition of an underplot.

² B.C. 195-159(?) Noted as a comic dramatist.

³ A comedy in five acts by Sir Robert Stapylton.

scene in the first act, which might not by as good reason be in the fifth. And if the action ought to be one, the tragedy ought likewise to conclude with the action of it. Thus in *Mustapha*¹, the play should naturally have ended with the death of Zanger, and not have given us the grace-cup after dinner, of Solyman's divorce from Roxolana.

The following properties of the action are so easy, that they need not my explaining. It ought to be great, and to consist of great persons, to distinguish it from Comedy, where the action is trivial, and the persons of inferior rank. The last quality of the action is, that it ought to be probable, as well as admirable and great. 'Tis not necessary that there should be historical truth in it, but always necessary that there should be a likeness of truth, something that is more than barely possible, *probable* being that which succeeds, or happens, oftener than it misses. To invent therefore a probability, and to make it wonderful, is the most difficult undertaking in the art of Poetry, for that which is not wonderful is not great, and that which is not probable will not delight a reasonable audience. This action, thus described, must be represented and not told, to distinguish Dramatic Poetry from Epic. but I hasten to the end or scope of Tragedy, which is, to rectify or purge our passions, fear and pity.

To instruct delightfully is the general end of all poetry. Philosophy instructs, but it performs its work by precept, which is not delightful, or not so delightful as example. To purge the passions by example, is therefore the particular instruction which belongs to Tragedy. Rapin, a judicious critic, has observed from Aristotle, that pride and want of commiseration are the most predominant vices in mankind, therefore to cure us of these two, the inventors of Tragedy have chosen to work upon two other passions, which are fear and pity. We are wrought to fear by their setting before our eyes some terrible example of misfortune, which happened to persons of the highest quality, for such an action demonstrates to us that no condition is privileged from the turns of fortune, this must of necessity cause terror in us, and consequently abate our pride.

¹ An heroic play by Lord Orrery, acted 1665

But when we see that the most virtuous, as well as the greatest, are not exempt from such misfortunes, that consideration moves pity in us, and insensibly works us to be helpful to, and tender over, the distressed, which is the noblest and most god-like of moral virtues. Here it is observable, that it is absolutely necessary to make a man virtuous, if we desire he should be pitied—we lament not, but detest, a wicked man, we are glad when we behold his crimes are punished, and that poetical justice is done upon him. Euripides was censured by the critics of his time for making his chief characters too wicked, for example, Phædra, though she loved her son-in-law with reluctance, and that it was a curse upon her family for offending Venus, yet was thought too ill a pattern for the stage. Shall we therefore banish all characters of villainy? I confess I am not of that opinion, but it is necessary that the hero of the play be not a villain, that is, the characters, which should move our pity, ought to have virtuous inclinations, and degrees of moral goodness in them. As for a perfect character of virtue, it never was in Nature, and therefore there can be no imitation of it, but there are alloys of frailty to be allowed for the chief persons, yet so that the good which is in them shall outweigh the bad, and consequently leave room for punishment on the one side, and pity on the other.

After all, if any one will ask me, whether a tragedy cannot be made upon any other grounds than those of exciting pity and terror in us,—Bossu¹, the best of modern critics, answers thus in general. That all excellent arts, and particularly that of poetry, have been invented and brought to perfection by men of a transcendent genius, and that, therefore, they, who practise afterwards the same arts, are obliged to tread in their footsteps, and to search in their writings the foundation of them, for it is not just that new rules should destroy the authority of the old. But Rapin writes more particularly thus, that no passions in a story are so proper to move our concernment as fear and pity, and that it is from our concernment we receive our pleasure, is undoubted, when the soul becomes agitated with fear for one character, or hope

¹ 1631-80. An eminent French critic

for another, then it is that we are pleased in Tragedy, by the interest which we take in their adventures

Here, therefore, the general answer may be given to the first question, how far we ought to imitate Shakespeare and Fletcher in their plots, namely, that we ought to follow them so far only as they have copied the excellencies of those who invented and brought to perfection Dramatic Poetry, those things only excepted, which religion, custom of countries, idioms of languages, &c, have altered in the superstructures, but not in the foundation of the design

How defective Shakespeare and Fletcher have been in all their plots, Mr Rymer has discovered in his criticisms neither can we, who follow them, be excused from the same, or greater errors, which are the more unpardonable in us, because we want their beauties to countervail our faults The best of their designs, the most approaching to antiquity, and the most conducing to move pity, is the *King and no King*¹, which, if the farce of Bessus² were thrown away, is of that inferior sort of tragedies, which end with a prosperous event It is probably derived from the story of Oedipus, with the character of Alexander the Great, in his extravagances, given to Arbaces³ The taking of this play, amongst many others, I cannot wholly ascribe to the excellency of the action, for I find it moving when it is read 'tis true, the faults of the plot are so evidently proved, that they can no longer be denied The beauties of it must therefore lie either in the lively touches of the passion, or we must conclude, as I think we may, that even in imperfect plots there are less degrees of Nature, by which some faint emotions of pity and terror are raised in us as a less engine will raise a less proportion of weight, though not so much as one of Archimedes'⁴ making, for nothing can move our nature, but by some natural reason, which works upon passions And, since

¹ By Beaumont and Fletcher

² A cowardly braggart of the same type as Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well*

³ The hero of *A King and no King*, vain, boastful, and brave

⁴ B C 287(*)-212 The most famous of ancient mathematicians He invented, among other things, a water-screw for pumping and a machine for lifting heavy weights

we acknowledge the effect, there must be something in the cause

The difference between Shakespeare and Fletcher in their plotting seems to be this, that Shakespeare generally moves more terror, and Fletcher more compassion for the first had a more masculine, a bolder and more fiery genius, the second, a more soft and womanish. In the mechanic beauties of the plot, which are the observation of the three Unities Time, Place, and Action, they are both deficient, but Shakespeare most. Ben Jonson reformed those errors in his comedies, yet one of Shakespeare's was regular before him, which is, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. For what remains concerning the design, you are to be referred to our English critic. The method which he has prescribed to raise it, from mistake, or ignorance of the crime, is certainly the best, though it is not the only, for amongst all the tragedies of Sophocles, there is but one, *Oedipus*, which is wholly built after that model.

After the plot, which is the foundation of the play, the next thing to which we ought to apply our judgement, is the manners, for now the poet comes to work above ground. The groundwork, indeed, is that which is most necessary, as that upon which depends the firmness of the whole fabric, yet it strikes not the eye so much, as the beauties or imperfections of the manners, the thoughts, and the expressions.

The first rule which Bossu prescribes to the writer of an Heroic Poem, and which holds too by the same reason in all Dramatic Poetry, is to make the moral of the work, that is, to lay down to yourself what that precept of morality shall be, which you would insinuate into the people, as, namely, Homer's (which I have copied in my *Conquest of Granada*¹), was, that union preserves a commonwealth, and discord destroys it, Sophocles, in his *Oedipus*, that no man is to be accounted happy before his death. 'Tis the moral that directs the whole action of the play to one centre, and that action or fable is the example built upon the moral, which confirms the truth of it to our experience when the fable is designed,

¹ One of the most bombastic heroic dramas of the period

then, and not before, the persons are to be introduced with their manners, characters, and passions

The manners, in a poem, are understood to be those inclinations, whether natural or acquired, which move and carry us to actions, good, bad, or indifferent, in a play, or which incline the persons to such or such actions I have anticipated part of this discourse already, in declaring that a poet ought not to make the manners perfectly good in his best persons, but neither are they to be more wicked in any of his characters than necessity requires To produce a villain, without other reason than a natural inclination to villany, is, in Poetry, to produce an effect without a cause, and to make him more a villain than he has just reason to be, is to make an effect which is stronger than the cause

The manners arise from many causes, and are either distinguished by complexion, as choleric and phlegmatic, or by the differences of age or sex, of climates, or quality of the persons, or their present condition They are likewise to be gathered from the several virtues, vices, or passions, and many other commonplaces, which a poet must be supposed to have learned from natural Philosophy, Ethics, and History, of all which, whosoever is ignorant, does not deserve the name of poet

But as the manners are useful in this art, they may be all comprised under these general heads first, they must be apparent, that is, in every character of the play, some inclinations of the person must appear, and these are shown in the actions and discourse Secondly, the manners must be suitable, or agreeing to the persons, that is, to the age, sex, dignity, and the other general heads of manners thus, when a poet has given the dignity of a king to one of his persons, in all his actions and speeches, that person must discover majesty, magnanimity, and jealousy of power, because these are suitable to the general manners of a king The third property of manners is resemblance, and this is founded upon the particular characters of men, as we have them delivered to us by relation or history, that is, when a poet has the known character of this or that man before him, he is bound to represent him such, at least not contrary to that which

fame has reported him to have been Thus, it is not a poet's choice to make Ulysses choleric, or Achilles patient, because Homer has described 'em quite otherwise Yet this is a rock on which ignorant writers daily split, and the absurdity is as monstrous as if a painter should draw a coward running from a battle, and tell us it was the picture of Alexander the Great

The last property of manners is, that they be constant and equal, that is, maintained the same, through the whole design thus, when Virgil had once given the name of *pious* to Aeneas, he was bound to show him such, in all his words and actions, through the whole poem All these properties Horace has hinted to a judicious observer 1 *Notandi sunt tibi mores*, 2 *Aut jamam sequere*, 3 *aut sibi convenientia finge*, 4 *Servetur ad unum, qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet*¹

From the manners, the characters of persons are derived, for, indeed, the characters are no other than the inclinations, as they appear in the several persons of the poem, a character being thus defined,—that which distinguishes one man from another Not to repeat the same things over again, which have been said of the manners, I will only add what is necessary here A character, or that which distinguishes one man from all others, cannot be supposed to consist of one particular virtue, or vice, or passion only, but 't is a composition of qualities which are not contrary to one another in the same person, thus, the same man may be liberal and valiant, but not liberal and covetous, so in a comical character, or humour (which is an inclination to this or that particular folly), Falstaff is a liar, and a coward, a glutton, and a buffoon, because all these qualities may agree in the same man, yet it is still to be observed, that one virtue, vice, and passion, ought to be shown in every man, as predominant over all the rest, as covetousness in Crassus, love of his country in Brutus, and the same in characters which are feigned

The chief character or hero in a tragedy, as I have already shown, ought in prudence to be such a man who

¹ (1) 'Pay regard to characterization' (2) 'either follow a well-known story' (3) 'or invent a coherent one' (4) 'let your plot continue to the end as it started in the beginning, and be consistent with itself'

has so much more of virtue in him than of vice, that he may be left amiable to the audience, which otherwise cannot have any concernment for his sufferings, and it is on this one character, that the pity and terror must be principally, if not wholly, founded a rule which is extremely necessary, and which none of the critics, that I know, have fully enough discovered to us For terror and compassion work but weakly when they are divided into many persons If Creon had been the chief character in *Oedipus*, there had neither been terror nor compassion moved, but only detestation of the man, and joy for his punishment, if Adrastus and Eurydice had been made more appearing characters, then the pity had been divided, and lessened on the part of Oedipus but making Oedipus the best and bravest person, and even Jocasta but an underpart to him, his virtues, and the punishment of his fatal crime, drew both the pity and the terror to himself

By what has been said of the manners, it will be easy for a reasonable man to judge whether the characters be truly or falsely drawn in a tragedy, for if there be no manners appearing in the characters, no concernment for the persons can be raised, no pity or horror can be moved, but by vice or virtue, therefore, without them, no person can have any business in the play If the inclinations be obscure, it is a sign the poet is in the dark, and knows not what manner of man he presents to you, and consequently you can have no idea, or very imperfect, of that man, nor can judge what resolutions he ought to take, or what words or actions are proper for him Most comedies made up of accidents or adventures are liable to fall into this error, and tragedies with many turns are subject to it, for the manners can never be evident, where the surprises of fortune take up all the business of the stage, and where the poet is more in pain to tell you what happened to such a man, than what he was 'Tis one of the excellencies of Shakespeare, that the manners of his persons are generally apparent, and you see their bent and inclinations Fletcher comes far short of him in this, as indeed he does almost in everything there are but glimmerings of manners in most of his comedies, which run upon

adventures, and in his tragedies, Rollo, Otto,¹ the King and no King,² Melantius,³ and many others of his best, are but pictures shown you in the twilight, you know not whether they resemble vice or virtue, and they are either good, bad, or indifferent, as the present scene requires it. But of all poets, this commendation is to be given to Ben Jonson, that the manneis, even of the most inconsiderable persons in his plays, are everywhere apparent.

By considering the second quality of manners, which is, that they be suitable to the age, quality, country, dignity, &c, of the character, we may likewise judge whether a poet has followed Nature. In this kind, Sophocles and Euripides have more excelled among the Greeks than Aeschylus, and Terence more than Plautus, among the Romans. Thus, Sophocles gives to Oedipus the true qualities of a king, in both those plays which bear his name, but in the latter, which is the *Oedipus Coloneus*, he lets fall on purpose his tragic style, his hero speaks not in the arbitrary tone, but remembers, in the softness of his complaints, that he is an unfortunate blind old man, that he is banished from his country, and persecuted by his next relations. The present French poets are generally accused, that wheresoever they lay the scene, or in whatsoever age, the manners of their heroes are wholly French. Racine's⁴ Bajazet is bred at Constantinople, but his civilities are conveyed to him, by some secret passage, from Versailles into the Seraglio. But our Shakespeare, having ascribed to Henry the Fourth the character of a king and of a father, gives him the perfect manners of each relation, when either he transacts with his son or with his subjects. Fletcher, on the other side, gives neither to Arbaces, nor to his king, in the *Maid's Tragedy*, the qualities which are suitable to a monarch, though he may be excused a little in the latter, for the king there is not uppermost in the character, 'tis the lover of Evadne,⁵ who is king only in a second consideration, and though he be unjust, and has other faults which shall be nameless, yet he is not the hero of

¹ Characters in the *Tragedy of Rollo, Duke of Normandy*

² Arbaces Cf. p. 129

³ A character in the *Maid's Tragedy*

⁵ The heroine of the *Maid's Tragedy*

the play 'Tis true, we find him a lawful prince (though I never heard of any king that was in Rhodes), and therefore Mr Rymer's criticism stands good, that he should not be shown in so vicious a character Sophocles has been more judicious in his *Antigona*, for, though he represents in Creon a bloody prince, yet he makes him not a lawful king, but an usurper, and Antigona herself is the heroine of the tragedy but when Philaster wounds Arethusa and the boy¹, and Perigot his mistress, in the *Faithful Shepherdess*,² both these are contrary to the character of manhood Nor is *Valentinian* managed much better, for, though Fletcher has taken his picture truly, and shown him as he was, an effeminate, voluptuous man, yet he has forgotten that he was an emperor, and has given him none of those royal marks which ought to appear in a lawful successor of the throne If it be inquired, what Fletcher should have done on this occasion, ought he not to have represented *Valentinian* as he was,—Bossu shall answer this question for me, by an instance of the like nature Mauritius, the Greek emperor, was a prince far surpassing *Valentinian*, for he was endued with many kingly virtues, he was religious, merciful, and valiant, but withal he was noted of extreme covetousness, a vice which is contrary to the character of a hero, or a prince therefore, says the critic, that emperor was no fit person to be represented in a tragedy, unless his good qualities were only to be shown, and his covetousness (which sullied them all) were slurred over by the artifice of the poet To return once more to Shakespeare, no man ever drew so many characters, or generally distinguished 'em better from one another, excepting only Jonson I will instance but in one, to show the copiousness of his intention, it is that of Caliban, or the monster, in the *Tempest* He seems there to have created a person which was not in Nature, a boldness which, at first sight, would appear intolerable, for he makes him a species of himself, begotten by an incubus on a witch, but this, as I have elsewhere proved, is not wholly beyond the bounds of credibility, at least the vulgar still believe it We have the separated notions of a spirit, and of a witch (and spirits, according to Plato, are vested with a subtle body, accord-

¹ *Philaster*, Act IV Sc III, IV² Act III Sc 1

ing to some of his followers, have different sexes), therefore, as from the distinct apprehensions of a horse, and of a man, imagination has formed a centaur, so, from those of an incubus and a sorceress, Shakespeare has produced his monster. Whether or no his generation can be defended, I leave to philosophy, but of this I am certain, that the poet has most judiciously furnished him with a person, a language, and a character, which will suit him, both by father's and mother's side. He has all the discontents and malice of a witch, and of a devil, besides a convenient proportion of the deadly sins, gluttony, sloth, and lust, are manifest, the dejectedness of a slave is likewise given him, and the ignorance of one bred up in a desert island. His person is monstrous, and he is the product of unnatural lust, and his language is as hobgoblin as his person, in all things he is distinguished from other mortals.¹ The characters of Fletcher are poor and narrow, in comparison of Shakespeare's, I remember not one which is not borrowed from him, unless you will accept that strange mixture of a man in the *King and no King*, so that in this part Shakespeare is generally worth our imitation, and to imitate Fletcher is but to copy after him who was a copier.

Under this general head of manners, the passions are naturally included as belonging to the characters. I speak not of pity and of terror, which are to be moved in the audience by the plot, but of anger, hatred, love, ambition, jealousy, revenge, &c, as they are shown in this or that person of the play. To describe these naturally, and to move them artfully, is one of the greatest commendations which can be given to a poet. To write pathetically, says Longinus, cannot proceed but from a lofty genius. A poet must be born with this quality; yet, unless he help himself by an acquired knowledge of the passions, what they are in their own nature, and by what springs they are to be moved, he will be subject either to raise them where they ought not to be raised, or not to raise them by the just degrees of nature, or to amplify them beyond the natural bounds, or not to observe the crisis and turns of them, in their cooling and decay, all which errors proceed from

¹ Compare with this Dr Furness's sketch of the character of Caliban *Variorum Shakespeare*, Introduction to *The Tempest*, pp vi, vii, viii

want of judgement in the poet, and from being unskilled in the principles of Moral Philosophy Nothing is more frequent in a fanciful writer, than to foil himself by not managing his strength, therefore, as in a wrestler, there is first required some measure of force, a well-knit body and active limbs, without which all instruction would be vain, yet, these being granted, if he want the skill which is necessary to a wrestler, he shall make but small advantage of his natural robustuousness so, in a poet, his inborn vehemence and force of spirit will only run him out of breath the sooner, if it be not supported by the help of Art The roar of passion, indeed, may please an audience, three parts of which are ignorant enough to think all is moving which is noise, and it may stretch the lungs of an ambitious actor, who will die upon the spot for a thundering clap, but it will move no other passion than indignation and contempt from judicious men Longinus, whom I have hitherto followed, continues thus *If the passions be artfully employed, the discourse becomes vehement and lofty if otherwise, there is nothing more ridiculous than a great passion out of season* and to this purpose he animadverts severely upon Aeschylus, who writ nothing in cold blood, but was always in a rapture, and in fury with his audience the inspiration was still upon him, he was ever tearing it upon the tripos¹, or (to run off as madly as he does, from one similitude to another) he was always at high-flood of passion, even in the dead ebb and lowest water-mark of the scene He who would raise the passion of a judicious audience, says a learned critic, must be sure to take his hearers along with him, if they be in a calm, 'tis in vain for him to be in a huff, he must move them by degrees, and kindle with 'em, otherwise he will be in danger of setting his own heap of stubble on fire, and of burning out by himself, without warming the company that stand about him They who would justify the madness of Poetry from the authority of Aristotle, have mistaken the text, and consequently the interpretation I imagine it to be false read, where he says of Poetry, that it is *Εὐφροῦς ἢ μανικοῦ*,² that it had always somewhat in it either of a genius, or of

¹ See p 88, note 1

² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 17 The context shows that Dryden's alteration is impossible

a madman 'Tis more probable that the original ran thus, that Poetry was Εἰς τοὺς οὐ μανικοῦ, that it belongs to a witty man, but not to a madman Thus then the passions, as they are considered simply and in themselves, suffer violence when they are perpetually maintained at the same height, for what melody can be made on that instrument, all whose strings are screwed up at first to their utmost stretch, and to the same sound ? But this is not the worst for the characters likewise bear a part in the general calamity, if you consider the passions as embodied in them, for it follows of necessity, that no man can be distinguished from another by his discourse, when every man is ranting, swaggering, and exclaiming with the same excess, as if it were the only business of all the characters to contend with each other for the prize at Billingsgate, or that the scene of the tragedy lay in Bet'lem¹ Suppose the poet should intend this man to be choleric, and that man to be patient, yet when they are confounded in the writing, you cannot distinguish them from one another for the man who was called patient and tame is only so before he speaks, but let his clack be set agoing, and he shall tongue it as impetuously, and as loudly, as the errantest hero in the play By this means, the characters are only distinct in name, but, in reality, all the men and women in the play are the same person No man should pretend to write, who cannot temper his fancy with his judgement nothing is more dangerous to a raw horseman, than a hot-mouthed jade without a curb

It is necessary therefore for a poet, who would concern an audience by describing of a passion, first to prepare it, and not to rush upon it all at once Ovid has judiciously shown the difference of these two ways, in the speeches of Ajax and Ulysses Ajax, from the very beginning, breaks out into his exclamations, and is swearing by his Maker,—*Agimus, proh Jupiter, inquit*² Ulysses, on the contrary, prepares his audience with all the submissiveness he can practise, and all the calmness of a reasonable man, he found his judges in a tranquillity of spirit, and therefore set

¹ The Bethlehem Hospital (contracted to Bet'lem, and later to Bedlam) was in Dryden's time the chief London asylum for the insane.

² "By Jupiter," he says, "we are pleading our cause."

out leisurely and softly with 'em, till he had warmed 'em by degrees, and then he began to mend his pace, and to draw them along with his own impetuosity yet so managing his breath, that it might not fail him at his need, and reserving his utmost proofs of ability even to the last. The success, you see, was answerable, for the crowd only applauded the speech of Ajax—

Vulgue secutum

Ultima murmur erat ¹

but the judges awarded the prize, for which they contended, to Ulysses—

*Mota manus procerum est, et quod facundia possct
Tum patuit, fortisque viri tulit arma disertus* ²

The next necessary rule is, to put nothing into the discourse which may hinder your moving of the passions. Too many accidents, as I have said, encumber the poet, as much as the arms of Saul did David ³, for the variety of passions which they produce are ever crossing and justling each other out of the way. He who treats of joy and grief together is in a fair way of causing neither of those effects. There is yet another obstacle to be removed, which is pointed wit, and sentences affected out of season, these are nothing of kin to the violence of passion: no man is at leisure to make sentences and similes, when his soul is in an agony. I the rather name this fault, that it may serve to mind me of my former errors, neither will I spare myself, but give an example of this kind from my *Indran Emperor*. Montezuma, pursued by his enemies, and seeking sanctuary, stands parleying without the fort, and describing his danger to Cydaria, in a simile of six lines—

As on the sands the frightened traveller
Sees the high seas come rolling from afar, &c ⁴

¹ 'And the applause of the mob had followed his last words'

'The band of chiefs was moved then was made manifest the power of eloquence, and the cunning speaker won the warrior's arms'

These passages occur in a description of the contest between Ulysses and Ajax for the arms of Achilles. Ovid, *Met.* xiii 1-384

³ 1 Samuel xvii 38, 39

⁴ *Indran Emperor*, Act v Sc ii

My Indian potentate was well skilled in the sea for an inland prince, and well improved since the first act, when he sent his son to discover it. The image had not been amiss from another man, at another time *sed nunc non erat hunc locus*¹ he destroyed the concernment which the audience might otherwise have had for him, for they could not think the danger near when he had the leisure to invent a simile.

If Shakespeare be allowed, as I think he must, to have made his characters distinct, it will easily be inferred that he understood the nature of the passions because it has been proved already that confused passions make undistinguishable characters yet I cannot deny that he has his failings, but they are not so much in the passions themselves, as in his manner of expression he often obscures his meaning by his words, and sometimes makes it unintelligible. I will not say of so great a poet, that he distinguished not the blown puffy style from true sublimity, but I may venture to maintain, that the fury of his fancy often transported him beyond the bounds of judgement, either in coining of new words and phrases, or racking words which were in use, into the violence of a catachresis². It is not that I would explode the use of metaphors from passion, for Longinus thinks 'em necessary to raise it but to use 'em at every word, to say nothing without a metaphor, a simile, an image, or description, is, I doubt, to smell a little too strongly of the buskin³. I must be forced to give an example of expressing passion figuratively, but that I may do it with respect to Shakespeare, it shall not be taken from anything of his 'tis an exclamation against Fortune, quoted in his *Hamlet* but written by some other poet—

Out, out, thou strumpet, Fortune! all you gods,
In general synod, take away her power,
Break all the spokes and felleys from her wheel,
And bowl the round nave down the hill of Heav'n,
As low as to the fiends⁴

¹ 'But this was not the place for them'

² i. e. misuse of terms

³ The high, thick-soled boot worn by the actors in Greek Tragedy. Compare our use of the word 'stilted'

⁴ *Hamlet*, Act II Sc. ii

And immediately after, speaking of Hecuba, when Priam was killed before her eyes—

The mobbled queen
Threatning the flame ran up and down
With bisson rheum, a clout about that head
Where late the diadem stood, and for a robe,
About her lank and all o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket in th' alarm of fear caught up
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced,
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs,
The instant burst of clamour that she made
(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven,
And passion in the gods

What a pudder is here kept in raising the expression of trifling thoughts! Would not a man have thought that the poet had been bound prentice to a wheelwright, for his first rant? and had followed a ragman, for the clout and blanket in the second? Fortune is painted on a wheel, and therefore the writer, in a rage, will have poetical justice done upon every member of that engine after this execution, he bowls the nave down-hill, from Heaven, to the fiends (an unreasonable long mark, a man would think), 'tis well there are no solid orbs to stop it in the way, or no element of fire to consume it but when it came to the earth, it must be monstrous heavy, to break ground as low as the centre His making milch the burning eyes of heaven was a pretty tolerable flight too and I think no man ever drew milk out of eyes before him yet, to make the wonder greater, these eyes were burning Such a sight indeed were enough to have raised passio in the gods, but to excuse the effects of it, he tells you, perhaps they did not see it Wise men would be glad to find a little sense couched under all these pompous words, for bombast is commonly the delight of that audience which loves Poetry, but understands it not and as commonly has been the practice of those writers,

who, not being able to infuse a natural passion into the mind, have made it their business to ply the ears, and to stun their judges by the noise. But Shakespeare does not often thus, for the passions in his scene between Brutus and Cassius are extremely natural, the thoughts are such as arise from the matter, the expression of 'em not viciously figurative. I cannot leave this subject, before I do justice to that divine poet, by giving you one of his passionate descriptions 'tis of Richard the Second when he was deposed, and led in triumph through the streets of London by Henry of Bolingbroke the painting of it is so lively, and the words so moving, that I have scarce read anything comparable to it in any other language. Suppose you have seen already the fortunate usurper passing through the crowd, and followed by the shouts and acclamations of the people, and now behold King Richard entering upon the scene consider the wretchedness of his condition, and his carriage in it, and refrain from pity, if you can—

As in a theatre, the eyes of men,¹
 After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
 Are idly bent on him that enters next,
 Thinking his prattle to be tedious
 Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
 Did scowl on Richard no man cried, God save him
 No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home,
 But dust was thrown upon his sacred head,
 Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off,
 His face still combating with tears and smiles
 (The badges of his grief and patience),
 That had not God (for some strong purpose) steel'd
 The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
 And barbarism itself have pitied him

To speak justly of this whole matter 'tis neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetic vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place, but 'tis a false measure of all these, something which is like them, and is not them, 'tis the Bristol-stone, which appears like a diamond, 'tis an extravagant thought,

¹ *Richard II*, Act v Sc 11

instead of a sublime one, 'tis roaring madness, instead of vehemence, and a sound of words, instead of sense. If Shakespeare were stripped of all the bombasts in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining, if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot but I fear (at least let me fear it for myself) that we, who ape his sounding words, have nothing of his thought, but are all outside, there is not so much as a dwarf within our giant's clothes. Therefore, let not Shakespeare suffer for our sakes, 'tis our fault, who succeed him in an age which is more refined, if we imitate him so ill, that we copy his failings only, and make a virtue of that in our writings which in his was an imperfection.

For what remains, the excellency of that poet was, as I have said, in the more manly passions, Fletcher's in the softer. Shakespeare writ better betwixt man and man, Fletcher, betwixt man and woman consequently, the one described friendship better, the other love. yet Shakespeare taught Fletcher to write love and Juliet and Desdemona are originals. 'Tis true, the scholar had the softer soul, but the master had the kinder. Friendship is both a virtue and a passion essentially, love is a passion only in its nature, and is not a virtue but by accident. good nature makes friendship, but effeminacy love. Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions, Fletcher a more confined and limited. for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly. To conclude all, he was a limb of Shakespeare.

I had intended to have proceeded to the last property of manners, which is, that they must be constant, and the characters maintained the same from the beginning to the end, and from thence to have proceeded to the thoughts and expressions suitable to a tragedy but I will first see how this will relish with the age. It is, I confess, but cursorily written, yet the judgement, which is given here, is generally founded upon experience, but because many men are shocked at the name of rules,

as if they were a kind of magisterial prescription upon poets, I will conclude with the words of Rapin, in his *Reflections* on Aristotle's work of *Poetry* 'If the rules be well considered, we shall find them to be made only to reduce Nature into method, to trace her step by step, and not to suffer the least mark of her to escape us 'tis only by these, that probability in fiction is maintained, which is the soul of poetry They are founded upon good sense, and sound reason, rather than on authority, for though Aristotle and Horace are produced, yet no man must argue, that what they write is true, because they writ it, but 'tis evident, by the ridiculous mistakes and gross absurdities which have been made by those poets who have taken their fancy only for their guide, that if this fancy be not regulated, it is a mere caprice, and utterly incapable to produce a reasonable and judicious poem'

PREFACE
TO THE
TRANSLATION OF OVID'S EPISTLES
1680

ALL translation, I suppose, may be reduced to these three heads

First, that of metaphrase, or turning an author word by word, and line by line, from one language into another. Thus, or near this manner, was Horace his *Art of Poetry* translated by Ben Jonson. The second way is that of paraphrase, or translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view by the translator, so as never to be lost, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense, and that too is admitted to be amplified, but not altered. Such is Mr Waller's translation of Virgil's Fourth *Aeneid*. The third way is that of imitation, where the translator (if now he has not lost that name) assumes the liberty, not only to vary from the words and sense, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion, and taking only some general hints from the original, to run division on the groundwork,¹ as he pleases. Such is Mr Cowley's practice in turning two Odes of Pindar², and one of Horace, into English.

Concerning the first of these methods, our master Horace has given us this caution

*Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres*

Not word for word too faithfully translate,
as the Earl of Roscommon³ has excellently rendered it. Too faithfully is, indeed, pedantically 'tis a faith like

¹ A musical term, meaning to write variations on a base

B C 522(?)—442(?) The greatest lyric poet of Greece

² 1634—84 One of the pioneers of the so-called 'classical' school of English poetry, and author of an *Essay on Translated Verse* which laid down the principles of poetic diction then in vogue

that which proceeds from superstition, blind and zealous
Take it in the expression of Sir John Denham to Sir Richard
Fanshaw ¹, on his version of the *Pastor Fido* ² —

That servile path thou nobly dost decline,
Of tracing word by word, and line by line
A new and nobler way thou dost pursue,
To make translations and translators too
They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,
True to his sense, but truer to his fame

'Tis almost impossible to translate verbally, and well,
at the same time, for the Latin (a most severe and com-
pendious language) often expresses that in one word,
which either the barbarity or the narrowness of modern
tongues cannot supply in more 'Tis frequent, also, that
the conceit is couched in some expression, which will be
lost in English —

Atque uidem venti vela fidemque ferent ³

What poet of our nation is so happy as to express this
thought literally in English, and to strike wit, or almost
sense, out of it ?

In short, the verbal copier is encumbered with so many
difficulties at once, that he can never disentangle himself
from all He is to consider, at the same time, the thought
of his author, and his words, and to find out the counterpart
to each in another language, and, besides this, he is to
confine himself to the compass of numbers, and the slavery
of rhyme 'Tis much like dancing on ropes with fettered
legs a man may shun a fall by using caution, but the
gracefulness of motion is not to be expected and when
we have said the best of it, 'tis but a foolish task, for no
sober man would put himself into a danger for the applause
of escaping without breaking his neck We see Ben
Jonson could not avoid obscurity in his literal translation
of Horace, attempted in the same compass of lines, nay,

¹ 1608-66 Diplomatist and author

² A pastoral drama by Guarini (1537-1612) which had a great vogue
in the seventeenth century

³ 'And the same winds will waft away your bark and your loyalty'
Said by Dido to Aeneas Ovid, *Heroides*, vii 8

Horace himself could scarce have done it to a Greek poet —

Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio ¹

either perspicuity or gracefulness will frequently be wanting Horace has indeed avoided both these rocks in his translation of the three first lines of Homer's *Odysseus*, which he has contracted into two —

*Dic mihi musa virum captae post tempora Trojae,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes*

Muse, speak the man, who, since the siege of Troy,
So many towns, such change of manners saw

EARL OF ROSCOMMON

But then the sufferings of Ulysses, which are a considerable part of that sentence, are omitted —

Ὅς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη ²

The consideration of these difficulties, in a servile, literal translation, not long since made two of our famous wits, Sir John Denham and Mr Cowley, to contrive another way of turning authors into our tongue, called, by the latter of them, *imitation*. As they were friends, I suppose they communicated their thoughts on this subject to each other, and therefore their reasons for it are little different, though the practice of one is much more moderate. I take imitation of an author, in their sense, to be an endeavour of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject, that is, not to translate his words, or to be confined to his sense, but only to set him as a pattern, and to write, as he supposes that author would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country. Yet I dare not say, that either of them have carried this libertine way of rendering authors (as Mr Cowley calls it) so far as my definition reaches, for in the *Pindaric Odes*, the customs and ceremonies of ancient Greece are still preserved. But I know not what mischief may arise hereafter from the example of such an innovation, when writers of unequal parts to him shall imitate so bold an undertaking. To

¹ 'In attempting to be concise I become obscure' Hor *Ars Poet* 25 ² 'Who was driven far and wide'

add and to diminish what we please, which is the way avowed by him, ought only to be granted to Mr Cowley, and that too only in his translation of Pindar, because he alone was able to make him amends, by giving him better of his own, whenever he refused his author's thoughts. Pindar is generally known to be a dark writer, to want connexion (I mean as to our understanding), to soar out of sight, and leave his reader at a gaze. So wild and ungovernable a poet cannot be translated literally, his genius is too strong to bear a chain, and Samson-like he shakes it off. A genius so elevated and unconfined as Mr Cowley's, was but necessary to make Pindar speak English, and that was to be performed by no other way than imitation. But if Virgil, or Ovid, or any regular intelligible authors, be thus used, 'tis no longer to be called their work, when neither the thoughts nor words are drawn from the original, but instead of them there is something new produced, which is almost the creation of another hand. By this way, 'tis true, somewhat that is excellent may be invented, perhaps more excellent than the first design, though Virgil must be still excepted, when that *perhaps* takes place. Yet he who is inquisitive to know an author's thoughts will be disappointed in his expectation, and 'tis not always that a man will be contented to have a present made him, when he expects the payment of a debt. To state it fairly, imitation of an author is the most advantageous way for a translator to show himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead. Sir John Denham (who advised more liberty than he took himself) gives his reason for his innovation, in his admirable Preface before the translation of the Second *Aeneid*. *Poetry is of so subtle a spirit, that, in pouring out of one language into another, it will all evaporate, and, if a new spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a caput mortuum*. I confess this argument holds good against a literal translation, but who defends it? Imitation and verbal version are, in my opinion, the two extremes which ought to be avoided, and therefore, when I have proposed the mean betwixt them, it will be seen how far his argument will reach.

No man is capable of translating poetry, who, besides a genius to that art, is not a master both of his author's language, and of his own, nor must we understand the language only of the poet, but his particular turn of thoughts and expression, which are the characters that distinguish, and as it were individuate him from all other writers. When we are come thus far, 'tis time to look into ourselves, to conform our genius to his, to give his thought either the same turn, if our tongue will bear it, or, if not, to vary but the dress, not to alter or destroy the substance. The like care must be taken of the more outward ornaments, the words. When they appear (which is but seldom) literally graceful, it were an injury to the author that they should be changed. But since every language is so full of its own proprieties, that what is beautiful in one, is often barbarous, nay sometimes nonsense, in another, it would be unreasonable to limit a translator to the narrow compass of his author's words. 'tis enough if he choose out some expression which does not vitiate the sense. I suppose he may stretch his chain to such a latitude, but by innovation of thoughts, methinks he breaks it. By this means the spirit of an author may be transfused, and yet not lost, and thus 'tis plain, that the reason alleged by Sir John Denham has no farther force than to expression, for thought, if it be translated truly, cannot be lost in another language, but the words that convey it to our apprehension (which are the image and ornament of that thought), may be so ill chosen, as to make it appear in an unhandsome dress, and rob it of its native lustre. There is, therefore, a liberty to be allowed for the expression, neither is it necessary that words and lines should be confined to the measure of their original. The sense of an author, generally speaking, is to be sacred and inviolable. If the fancy of Ovid be luxuriant, 'tis his character to be so, and if I retrench it, he is no longer Ovid. It will be replied, that he receives advantage by this lopping of his superfluous branches, but I rejoin, that a translator has no such right. When a painter copies from the life, I suppose he has no privilege to alter features and lineaments, under pretence that his picture will look better: perhaps the face which he has drawn would be more exact, if the eyes or nose

were altered, but 'tis his business to make it resemble the original. In two cases only there may a seeming difficulty arise, that is, if the thought be notoriously trivial or dishonest, but the same answer will serve for both, that then they ought not to be translated —

Et quae
*Desperes tractata nitescere posse, relinquo*¹

Thus I have ventured to give my opinion on this subject against the authority of two great men, but I hope without offence to either of their memories, for I both loved them living, and reverence them now they are dead. But if, after what I have urged, it be thought by better judges that the praise of a translation consists in adding new beauties to the piece, thereby to recompense the loss which it sustains by change of language, I shall be willing to be taught better, and to recant. In the meantime it seems to me that the true reason why we have so few versions which are tolerable, is not from the too close pursuing of the author's sense, but because there are so few who have all the talents which are requisite for translation, and that there is so little praise and so small encouragement for so considerable a part of learning.

To apply, in short, what has been said to this present work, the reader will here find most of the Translations with some little latitude or variation from the author's sense. That of *Oenone to Paris* is in Mr Cowley's way of imitation only. I was desired to say that the author, who is of the fair sex, understood not Latin. But if she does not, I am afraid she has given us occasion to be ashamed who do.

For my own part, I am ready to acknowledge that I have transgressed the rules which I have given, and taken more liberty than a just translation will allow. But so many gentlemen whose wit and learning are well known being joined in it, I doubt not but that their excellencies will make you ample satisfaction for my errors.

¹ 'And you had better omit whatever, you feel, cannot be made to shine in the handling' Hor. *Ars Poet* 150

AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY

1668

To begin, then, with Shakespeare He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul All the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily, when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation he was naturally learned, he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature, he looked inwards, and found her there I cannot say he is everywhere alike, were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind He is many times flat, insipid, his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him, no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi*¹

The consideration of this made Mr Hales² of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare, and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem and in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him

Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak,

¹ 'As high as cypresses are wont to soar among the plant wayfaring trees' Virgil, *Ecl* 1 25

² 1584-1656 Noted as preacher and scholar Fellow of Eton, and a friend of Sir Henry Wotton, the poet, who was Provost during part of the time that Hales was there

had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgement, in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him, and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster* for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death, and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better, whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour,¹ which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage, two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He

¹ 'When some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers
In their confusions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour'
Prologue to *Every Man out of his Humour*

was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him, but something of art was wanting to the Drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions, his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them. There is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*¹. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authois like a monarch, and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his serious plays perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them. wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets, Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing, I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him, as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us.

¹ Jonson's two tragedies

FROM ORIGINAL AND PROGRESS OF SATIRE [MILTON]

1693

As for Mr Milton, whom we all admire with so much justice, his subject is not that of an Heroic Poem, properly so called His design is the losing of our happiness, his event is not prosperous, like that of all other epic works, his heavenly machines are many, and his human persons are but two But I will not take Mr Rymer's work out of his hands He has promised the world a critique on that author, wherein, though he will not allow his poem for heroic, I hope he will grant us, that his thoughts are elevated, his words sounding, and that no man has so happily copied the manner of Homer, or so copiously translated his Grecisms, and the Latin elegancies of Virgil 'Tis true, he runs into a flat of thought, sometimes for a hundred lines together, but it is when he is got into a track of Scripture His antiquated words were his choice, not his necessity, for therein he imitated Spenser, as Spenser did Chaucer And though, perhaps, the love of their masters may have transported both too far, in the frequent use of them, yet, in my opinion, obsolete words may then be laudably revived, when either they are more sounding, or more significant, than those in practice, and when their obscurity is taken away, by joining other words to them, which clear the sense, according to the rule of Horace, for the admission of new words But in both cases a moderation is to be observed in the use of them for unnecessary coinage, as well as unnecessary revival, runs into affectation, a fault to be avoided on either hand Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, though I may excuse him, by the example of Hannibal Caro¹, and other Italians, who have used it,

¹ 1507-66 A celebrated Italian poet and critic who translated the *Aeneid* of Virgil

for whatever causes he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme (which I have not now the leisure to examine), his own particular reason is plainly this, that rhyme was not his talent, he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it, which is manifest in his *Juvenilia*, or verses written in his youth, where his rhyme is always constrained and forced, and comes hardly from him, at an age when the soul is most pliant, and the passion of love makes almost every man a rhymers, though not a poet¹

¹ Compare with this Johnson's criticism in his *Life of Milton* 'The English poems, though they make no promise of *Paradise Lost*, have this evidence of genius, that they have a cast original and unborrowed. But their peculiarity is not excellence, if they differ from the verses of others, they differ for the worse, for they are too often distinguished by repulsive harshness, the combinations of words are new, but they are not pleasing, the rhymes and epithets seem to be laboriously sought and violently applied.'

SATIRE

FROM ORIGINAL AND PROGRESS OF SATIRE

I

THUS I have treated, in a new method, the comparison betwixt Horace, Juvenal, and Persius¹, somewhat of their particular manner belonging to all of them is yet remaining to be considered Persius was grave, and particularly opposed his gravity to lewdness, which was the predominant vice in Nero's court, at the time when he published his Satires, which was before that emperor fell into the excess of cruelty Horace was a mild admonisher, a court-satirist, fit for the gentle times of Augustus, and more fit, for the reasons which I have already given Juvenal was as proper for his times, as they for theirs, his was an age that deserved a more severe chastisement, vices were more gross and open, more flagitious, more encouraged by the example of a tyrant, and more protected by his authority Therefore, wheresoever Juvenal mentions Nero, he means Domitian, whom he dares not attack in his own person, but scourges him by proxy Heinsius² urges in praise of Horace, that, according to the ancient art and law of satire, it should be nearer to comedy than tragedy, not declaiming against vice, but only laughing at it Neither Persius nor Juvenal was ignorant of this, for they had both studied Horace And the thing itself is plainly true But as they had read Horace, they had likewise read Lucilius, of whom Persius says *secut urbem, et genunnum fregit in illis*³, meaning Mutius and Lupus,

¹ Horace, B C 65-8 Juvenal, A D 46-130(?) Persius, A D 34, died very young, having written one volume of satires

² 1581-1655 Professor at Leyden, and famous as scholar and critic

³ 'He bit deep into the Town (I mean you, Mutius and Lupus) and broke his jaw-tooth on it' (Persius i 114)

and Juvenal also mentions him in these words *Ense velut stricto, quoties Lucilius ardens infremuit*, &c.¹ So that they thought the imitation of Lucilius was more proper to their purpose than that of Horace 'They changed satire' (says Holyday²), 'but they changed it for the better, for the business being to reform great vices, chastisement goes further than admonition, whereas a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, does rather anger than amend a man'

Thus far that learned critic, Barten Holyday, whose interpretation and illustrations of Juvenal are as excellent, as the verse of his translation and his English are lame and pitiful. For 'tis not enough to give us the meaning of a poet, which I acknowledge him to have performed most faithfully, but he must also imitate his genius and his numbers, as far as the English will come up to the elegance of the original. In few words, 'tis only for a poet to translate a poem. Holyday and Stapylton³ had not enough considered this, when they attempted Juvenal, but I forbear reflections, only I beg leave to take notice of this sentence, where Holyday says, 'a perpetual grin, like that of Horace, rather angers than amends a man'. I cannot give him up the manner of Horace in low satire so easily. Let the chastisement of Juvenal be never so necessary for his new kind of satire, let him declaim as wittily and sharply as he pleases, yet still the nicest and most delicate touches of satire consist in fine raillery. This, my Lord, is your particular talent, to which even Juvenal could not arrive. 'Tis not reading, 'tis not imitation of an author, which can produce this fineness, it must be inborn, it must proceed from a genius, and particular way of thinking, which is not to be taught, and therefore not to be imitated by him who has it not from nature. How easy is it to call rogue and villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a man appear a fool, a blockhead, or a knave, without using any of those opprobrious terms! To spare the grossness of the

¹ 'Whenever burning Lucilius raged on with a drawn sword'
Juv. i. 165

1593-1661 Dramatist, translator, and divine. Author of a line for line translation of Juvenal.

³ Died 1669. Sir Robert Stapylton, the cavalier dramatist. He also translated Juvenal's satires.

names, and to do the thing yet more severely, is to draw a full face, and to make the nose and cheeks stand out, and yet not to employ any depth of shadowing. This is the mystery of that noble trade, which yet no master can teach to his apprentice, he may give the rules, but the scholar is never the nearer in his practice. Neither is it true, that this fineness of raillery is offensive. A witty man is tickled while he is hurt in this manner, and a fool feels it not. The occasion of an offence may possibly be given, but he cannot take it. If it be granted, that in effect this way does more mischief, that a man is secretly wounded, and though he be not sensible himself, yet the malicious world will find it out for him, yet there is still a vast difference betwixt the slovenly butchering of a man, and the fineness of a stroke that separates the head from the body, and leaves it standing in its place. A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's wife said of his servant, of a plain piece of work, a bare hanging, but to make a malefactor die sweetly was only belonging to her husband. I wish I could apply it to myself, if the reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me. The character of Zimri in my *Absalom*¹ is, in my opinion, worth the whole poem. It is not bloody, but it is ridiculous enough, and he, for whom it was intended, was too witty to resent it as an injury. If I had railed, I might have suffered for it justly, but I managed my own work more happily, perhaps more dexterously. I avoided the mention of great crimes, and applied myself to the representing of blindsides, and little extravagancies, to which, the wittier a man is, he is generally the more obnoxious. It succeeded as I wished, the jest went round, and he was laughed at in his turn who began the frolic.

¹ Cf p 179

II

Will your Lordship¹ be pleased to prolong my audience, only so far, till I tell you my own trivial thoughts, how a modern satire should be made? I will not deviate in the least from the precepts and examples of the Ancients, who were always our best masters. I will only illustrate them, and discover some of the hidden beauties in their designs, that we thereby may form our own in imitation of them. Will you please but to observe, that Persius, the least in dignity of all the three, has notwithstanding been the first who has discovered to us this important secret, in the designing of a perfect satire, that it ought only to treat of one subject, to be confined to one particular theme, or at least, to one principally. If other vices occur in the management of the chief, they should only be transiently lashed, and not be insisted on, so as to make the design double. As in a play of the English fashion, which we call a tragi-comedy, there is to be but one main design, and though there be an underplot, or second walk of comical characters and adventures, yet they are subservient to the chief fable, carried along under it, and helping to it, so that the drama may not seem a monster with two heads.

Under this unity of theme, or subject, is comprehended another rule for perfecting the design of true satire. The poet is bound, and that *ex officio*, to give his reader some one precept of moral virtue, and to caution him against some one particular vice or folly. Other virtues, subordinate to the first, may be recommended under that chief head, and other vices or follies may be scourged, besides that which he principally intends. But he is chiefly to inculcate one virtue, and insist on that. Thus Juvenal, in every satire excepting the first, ties himself to one principal instructive point, or to the shunning of moral evil. Even in the Sixth,

¹ The Essay is dedicated to Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex.

which seems only an arraignment of the whole sex of womankind, there is a latent admonition to avoid ill women, by showing how very few, who are virtuous and good, are to be found amongst them. But this, though the wittiest of all his satires, has yet the least of truth or instruction in it. He has run himself into his old declamatory way, and almost forgotten that he was now setting up for a moral poet.

I have already declared who are the only persons that are the adequate object of private satire, and who they are that may properly be exposed by name for public examples of vices and follies, and therefore I will trouble your Lordship no further with them. Of the best and finest manner of Satire, I have said enough in the comparison betwixt Juvenal and Horace. 'tis that sharp, well-mannered way of laughing a folly out of countenance, of which your Lordship is the best master in this age. I will proceed to the versification, which is most proper for it, and add somewhat to what I have said already on that subject. The sort of verse which is called burlesque, consisting of eight syllables, or four feet, is that which our excellent Hudibras¹ has chosen. I ought to have mentioned him before, when I spoke of Donne², but by a slip of an old man's memory he was forgotten. The worth of his poem is too well known to need my commendation, and he is above my censure. His satire is of the Varronian³ kind, though unmixed with prose. The choice of his numbers is suitable enough to his design, as he has managed it, but in any other hand, the shortness of his verse, and the quick returns of rhyme, had debased the dignity of style.

Samuel Butler, whose mock-heroic poem, *Hudibras* (1663-4), a satire on the Puritans, was extremely popular. The following is a specimen of his versification —

'When gospel-trumpeter, surrounded
With long-ear'd rout, to battle sounded
And pulpit, drum ecclesiastic,
Was beat with feet instead of a stick
Then did Sir Knight abandon dwelling,
And out he rode a colonelling'

² 1573-1631 Dean of St Paul's, and author of several satires, love-lyrics, and hymns

³ Varro, b c 116-27 A voluminous author who wrote several satires

And besides, the double rhyme (a necessary companion of burlesque writing), is not so proper for manly satire, for it turns earnest too much to jest, and gives us a boyish kind of pleasure. It tickles awkwardly with a kind of pain, to the best sort of readers, we are pleased ungratefully, and, if I may say so, against our liking. We thank him not for giving us that unseasonable delight, when we know he could have given us a better, and more solid. He might have left that task to others, who, not being able to put in thought, can only make us grin with the excrescence of a word of two or three syllables in the close. 'Tis, indeed, below so great a master to make use of such a little instrument. But his good sense is perpetually shining through all he writes, it affords us not the time of finding faults. We pass through the levity of his rhyme, and are immediately carried into some admirable useful thought. After all, he has chosen this kind of verse, and has written the best in it, and had he taken another, he would always have excelled, as we say of a court favourite, that whatsoever his office be, he still makes it uppermost, and most beneficial to himself.

The quickness of your imagination, my Lord, has already prevented me, and you know beforehand, that I would prefer the verse of ten syllables, which we call the English heroic, to that of eight. This is truly my opinion. For this sort of number is more roomy, the thought can turn itself with greater ease in a larger compass. When the rhyme comes too thick upon us, it straightens the expression, we are thinking of the close, when we should be employed in adorning the thought. It makes a poet giddy with turning in a space too narrow for his imagination, he loses many beauties, without gaining one advantage. For a burlesque rhyme I have already concluded to be none, or, if it were, 'tis more easily purchased in ten syllables than in eight. In both occasions 'tis as in a tennis-court, when the strokes of greater force are given, when we strike out and play at length.

I have given your Lordship but this bare hint, in what verse and in what manner this sort of satire may be best managed. Had I time, I could enlarge on the beautiful turns of words and thoughts, which are as requisite in

this, as in heroic poetry itself, of which the satire is undoubtedly a species. With these beautiful turns, I confess myself to have been unacquainted, till about twenty years ago, in a conversation which I had with that noble wit of Scotland, Sir George Mackenzie¹, he asked me why I did not imitate in my verses the turns of Mr Waller and Sir John Denham, of which he repeated many to me. I had often read with pleasure, and with some profit, those two fathers of our English poetry, but had not seriously enough considered those beauties which gave the last perfection to their works. Some sprinklings of this kind I had also formerly in my plays, but they were casual, and not designed. But this hint, thus seasonably given me, first made me sensible of my own wants, and brought me afterwards to seek for the supply of them in other English authors. I looked over the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley, there I found, instead of them, the points of wit, and quirks of epigram, even in the *Davideis*², an heroic poem, which is of an opposite nature to those puerilities, but no elegant turns either on the word or on the thought. Then I consulted a greater genius (without offence to the *Manes*³ of that noble author), I mean Milton. But as he endeavours everywhere to express Homer, whose age had not arrived to that fineness, I found in him a true sublimity, lofty thoughts, which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words, which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them, but I found not there neither that for which I looked. At last I had recourse to his master, Spenser, the author of that immortal poem called the *Fairy Queen*, and there I met with that which I had been looking for so long in vain. Spenser had studied Virgil to as much advantage as Milton had done Homer, and amongst the rest of his excellencies had copied that. Looking farther into the Italian, I found Tasso had done

¹ Probably the king's advocate of that name, noted for his severity towards the covenanters. He was, himself, a voluminous writer.

² Cowley's religious epic, containing the history of David.

³ i.e. the spirit. The Manes were the gods of the dead.

the same , nay more, that all the sonnets in that language are on the turn of the first thought , which Mr Walsh, in his late ingenious preface to his poems, has observed In short, Virgil and Ovid are the two principal fountains of them in Latin poetry And the French at this day are so fond of them, that they judge them to be the first beauties *delicat et bien tourné*, are the highest commendations which they bestow on somewhat which they think a masterpiece

I might descend also to the mechanic beauties of heroic verse , but we have yet no English *prosodia*, not so much as a tolerable dictionary, or a grammar , so that our language is in a manner barbarous , and what government will encourage any one, or more, who are capable of refining it, I know not but nothing under a public expense can go through with it And I rather fear a declination of the language, than hope an advancement of it in the present age

I am still speaking to you, my Lord, though, in all probability, you are already out of hearing Nothing, which my meanness can produce, is worthy of this long attention But I am come to the last petition of Abraham , if there be ten righteous lines, in this vast Preface, spare it for their sake , and also spare the next city, because it is but a little one

I would excuse the performance of this translation, if it were all my own , but the better, though not the greater part, being the work of some gentlemen, who have succeeded very happily in their undertaking, let their excellencies atone for my imperfections, and those of my sons I have perused some of the satires, which are done by other hands , and they seem to me as perfect in their kind, as anything I have seen in English verse The common way which we have taken is not a literal translation, but a kind of paraphrase , or somewhat, which is yet more loose, betwixt a paraphrase and imitation It was not possible for us, or any men, to have made it pleasant any other way If rendering the exact sense of those authors, almost line for line, had been our business, Barten Holyday had done it already to our hands and by the help of his learned notes and illustrations not only

of Juvenal and Persius, but what yet is more obscure, his own verses, might be understood

But he wrote for fame, and wrote to scholars we write only for the pleasure and entertainment of those gentlemen and ladies, who, though they are not scholars, are not ignorant persons of understanding and good sense, who, not having been conversant in the original, or at least not having made Latin verse so much their business as to be critics in it, would be glad to find if the wit of our two great authors be answerable to their fame and reputation in the world We have, therefore, endeavoured to give the public all the satisfaction we are able in this kind

And if we are not altogether so faithful to our author, as our predecessors Holyday and Stapylton, yet we may challenge to ourselves this praise, that we shall be far more pleasing to our readers We have followed our authors at greater distance, though not step by step, as they have done for oftentimes they have gone so close, that they have trod on the heels of Juvenal and Persius, and hurt them by their too near approach A noble author would not be pursued too close by a translator We lose his spirit, when we think to take his body The grosser part remains with us, but the soul is flown away in some noble expression, or some delicate turn of words, or thought Thus Holyday, who made this way his choice, seized the meaning of Juvenal, but the poetry has always escaped him

They who will not grant me, that pleasure is one of the ends of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction, must yet allow, that, without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but a bare and dry philosophy a crude preparation of morals, which we may have from Aristotle and Epictetus, with more profit than from any poet Neither Holyday nor Stapylton have imitated Juvenal in the poetical part of him, his diction and his elocution Nor had they been poets, as neither of them were, yet, in the way they took, it was impossible for them to have succeeded in the poetic part

The English verse, which we call heroic, consists of no more than ten syllables, the Latin hexameter some-

times rises to seventeen, as, for example, this verse in Virgil—

*Pulverulenta putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum*¹

Here is the difference of no less than seven syllables in a line, betwixt the English and the Latin. Now the medium of these is about fourteen syllables, because the dactyl is a more frequent foot in hexameters than the spondee². But Holyday, without considering that he wrote with the disadvantage of four syllables less in every verse, endeavours to make one of his lines to comprehend the sense of one of Juvenal's. According to the falsity of the proposition was the success. He was forced to crowd his verse with ill-sounding monosyllables, of which our barbarous language affords him a wild plenty, and by that means he arrived at his pedantic end, which was to make a literal translation. His verses have nothing of verse in them, but only the worst part of it, the rhyme, and that, into the bargain, is far from good. But, which is more intolerable, by cramming his ill-chosen, and worse-sounding monosyllables so close together, the very sense which he endeavours to explain is become more obscure than that of his author, so that Holyday himself cannot be understood, without as large a commentary as that which he makes on his two authors. For my own part, I can make a shift to find the meaning of Juvenal without his notes, but his translation is more difficult than his author. And I find beauties in the Latin to recompense my pains, but, in Holyday and Stapylton, my ears, in the first place, are mortally offended, and then their sense is so perplexed, that I return to the original, as the more pleasing task, as well as the more easy.

¹ 'The dusty hoof-beat shakes the crumbling plain' *Aen* 8 596
The quotation is inaccurate, but this does not affect Dryden's point in the present instance.

² A dactyl is — ◡ ◡, e.g. beautiful. A spondee is — —, e.g. forthright. Typical Hexameters in Latin and English are —

— ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — —
Quid faci | at laet | as seget | es, quo | sidere | terram,
and

— ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — — ◡ ◡ — —
All travel | lers do | gladly re | port great | praise of U | lysses,
each of which contains fifteen syllables.

This must be said for our translation, that, if we give not the whole sense of Juvenal, yet we give the most considerable part of it we give it, in general, so clearly, that few notes are sufficient to make us intelligible. We make our author at least appear in a poetic dress. We have actually made him more sounding, and more elegant, than he was before in English, and have endeavoured to make him speak that kind of English, which he would have spoken had he lived in England, and had written to this age. If sometimes any of us (and 'tis but seldom) make him express the customs and manners of our native country rather than of Rome, 'tis either when there was some kind of analogy betwixt their customs and ours, or when, to make him more easy to vulgar understandings, we give him those manners which are familiar to us. But I defend not this innovation, 'tis enough if I can excuse it. For to speak sincerely, the manners of nations and ages are not to be confounded, we should either make them English, or leave them Roman. If this can neither be defended nor excused, let it be pardoned at least, because it is acknowledged, and so much the more easily, as being a fault which is never committed without some pleasure to the reader.

Thus, my Lord, having troubled you with a tedious visit, the best manners will be shown in the least ceremony. I will slip away while your back is turned, and while you are otherwise employed, with great confusion for having entertained you so long with this discourse, and for having no other recompense to make you, than the worthy labours of my fellow-undertakers in this work, and the thankful acknowledgements, prayers, and perpetual good wishes, of

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged, most humble,

and most obedient Servant,

JOHN DRYDEN

Aug 18, 1692

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

1681-2

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Throughout his reign, Charles II worked steadily to obtain toleration for the Catholic^s. He was suspected—not without cause—of intriguing with Louis XIV, the champion of Catholicism and absolutism in Europe, and the success of the French over the Protestant armies in Flanders (1677) raised feeling in England to fever heat. The Earl of Shaftesbury came forward as leader of the Protestant party and warmly supported Titus Oates, an impostor who professed to have discovered a Popish Plot to murder the King, and establish the Roman Catholic religion in England.

Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* was written to ridicule the whole proceeding.

KEY TO NAMES

Abbethdim, Lord Chancellor	Jerusalem, London
Absalom, Duke of Monmouth	Jewish Rabbins, Doctors of the
Achitophel, Earl of Shaftesbury	Church of England
Adriel, Earl of Mulgrave	Jonas, Sir William Jones
Agag, Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey	Jotham, Marquis of Halifax
Amiel, Mr (afterwards Sir Edward) Seymour	Michal, Queen Catharine
Annabel, Duchess of Monmouth	Nadab, Lord Howard of Escrick
Balaam, Earl of Huntingdon	Pharaoh, Louis XIV, King of
Barzillai, Duke of Ormond	France
Bathsheba, Duchess of Portsmouth	Sagan of Jerusalem, Bishop of
Caleb, Lord Grey of Wark	London
Corah, Titus Oates	Sanhedrin, Parliament
David, King Charles II	Saul, Oliver Cromwell
Egypt, France	Shimei, Slingsby Bethel
Ethnic Plot, Popish Plot	Sion, London
Hebrew Priests, Church of England clergymen	Solymean rout, the London rabble
Hebron, Scotland	Tyre, Holland
Ishbosheth, Richard Cromwell	Uzza, John Hall, commonly called
Israel, England	Jack Hall
Issachar, Thomas Thynne of Longleat	Western Dome, Westminster
Jebusites, Papists	Abbey
	Zadoc, Sancroft, Archbishop of
	Canterbury
	Zaken, member of parliament
	Ziloah, Sir John Moore
	Zimri, Duke of Buckingham

PART I

THE inhabitants of old Jerusalem
 Were Jebusites, the town so-called from them,
 And thens the native right
 But when the chosen people grew more strong,
 The rightful cause at length became the wrong,
 And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
 They still were thought God's enemies the more
 Thus worn and weakened, well or ill content,
 Submit they must to David's government
 Impoverished and deprived of all command, 10
 Then taxes doubled as they lost their land,
 And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
 Their gods disgraced, and burnt like common wood
 This set the heathen priesthood in a flame,
 For priests of all religions are the same
 Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,
 Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
 In his defence his servants are as bold,
 As if he had been born of beaten gold
 The Jewish Rabbins¹, though their enemies, 20
 In this conclude them honest men and wise
 For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,
 To espouse his cause by whom they eat and drink
 From hence began that Plot, the nation's curse,
 Bad in itself, but represented worse,
 Raised in extremes, and in extremes decried,
 With oaths affirmed, with dying vows denied,
 Not weighed or winnowed by the multitude,
 But swallowed in the mass, unchewed and crude
 Some truth there was, but dashed and brewed with lies 30
 To please the fools and puzzle all the wise
 Succeeding times did equal folly call
 Believing nothing or believing all
 The Egyptian rites the Jebusites embraced,
 Where gods were recommended by their taste,
 Such savoury deities must needs be good
 As served at once for worship and for food²

¹ Doctors of the law² The Egyptians held certain animals sacred Of these the ox was one of the most important

By force they could not introduce these gods,
For ten to one in former days was odds
So fraud was used, the sacrificer's trade , 40
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews
And raked for converts even the court and stews
Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,
Because the fleece accompanies the flock
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay
By guns, invented since full many a day
Our author swears it not , but who can know
How far the Devil and Jebusites may go ?
This plot, which failed for want of common sense, 50
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence ,
For as, when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And every hostile humour which before
Slept quiet in its channels bubbles o'er ,
So several factions from this first ferment
Work up to foam and threat the government
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought
wise,
Opposed the power to which they could not use
Some had in courts been great and, thrown from
thence, 60
Like fiends were hardened in impenitence
Some by their Monarch's fatal mercy grown
From pardoned rebels kinsmen to the throne
Were raised in power and public office high ,
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie
Of these the false Achitophel was first,
A name to all succeeding ages curst
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
Restless, unfixed in principles and place, 70
In power displeased, impatient of disgrace ,
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,

He sought the storms, but, for a calm unfit,
 Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit
 Great wits are sure to madness near allied
 And thin partitions do their bounds divide, 80
 Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
 Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
 Punish a body which he could not please,
 Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
 And all to leave what with his toil he won
 To that unfeathered two-legged thing, a son,
 Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
 And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy
 In friendship false, implacable in hate,
 Resolved to run or to rule the state, 90
 To compass this the triple bond¹ he broke,
 The pillars of the public safety shook,
 And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke,
 Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
 Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name
 So easy still it proves in factious times
 With public zeal to cancel private crimes
 How safe is treason and how sacred ill,
 Where none can sin against the people's will,
 Where crowds can wink and no offence be known, 100
 Since in another's guilt they find their own!
 Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge
 The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge
 In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin²
 With more discerning eyes or hands more clean,
 Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,
 Swift of despatch and easy of access
 Oh! had he been content to serve the crown
 With virtues only proper to the gown,
 Or had the rankness of the soil been freed 110
 From cockle that oppressed the noble seed,
 David for him his tuneful harp had strung
 And Heaven had wanted one immortal song

¹ The Triple Alliance between England, Sweden, and Holland (1667), which was dissolved by the second Dutch war. Closer relations ensued between England and France

² The President of the Jewish judicature

But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame and lazy happiness,
Disdained the golden fruit to gather free
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree
Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since, 120
He stood at bold defiance with his Prince,
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws
The wished occasion of the Plot he takes,
Some circumstances find, but more he makes,
By buzzing emissaries fills the ears
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the King himself a Jebusite
Weak arguments ' which yet he knew full well 130
Were strong with people easy to rebel
For governed by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the prime renews
And once in twenty years their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalom
Not that he wished his greatness to create,
For politicians neither love nor hate,
But, for he knew his title not allowed 140
Would keep him still depending on the crowd,
That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy
Him he attempts with studied arts to please
And sheds his venom in such words as these

' Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet ruled the southern sky,
Thy longing country's darling and desire,
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire,
Their second Moses, whose extended wand 150
Divides the seas and shows the promised land,
Whose dawning day in every distant age
Has exercised the sacred prophet's rage,

The people's prayer, the glad diviner's theme,
 The young men's vision and the old men's dream,
 Thee Saviour, thee the nation's vows confess,
 And never satisfied with seeing bless
 Swift unspoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
 And stammering babes are taught to hsp thy name
 How long wilt thou the general joy detain, 160
 Starve and defraud the people of thy reign ?
 Content ingloriously to pass thy days,
 Like one of virtue's fools that feeds on praise,
 Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
 Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight
 Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
 Or gathered ripe, or rot upon the tree
 Heaven has to all allotted, soon or late,
 Some lucky revolution of their fate
 Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill, 170
 (For human good depends on human will,)
 Our fortune rolls as from a smooth descent
 And from the first impression takes the bent,
 But, if unseized, she glides away like wind
 And leaves repenting folly far behind
 Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize
 And spreads her locks before her as she flies
 Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
 Not dared, when fortune called him to be King,
 At Gath an exile he might still remain, 180
 And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain
 Let his successful youth your hopes engage,
 But shun the example of declining age
 Behold him setting in his western skies,
 The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise,
 He is not now, as when, on Jordan's sand,
 The joyful people thronged to see him land,
 Covering the beach and blackening all the strand,
 But like the Prince of Angels, from his height
 Comes tumbling downwards with diminished light 190
 Betrayed by one poor plot to public scorn,
 (Our only blessing since his curst return.)
 Those heaps of people, which one sheaf did bind,
 Blown off and scattered by a puff of wind

What strength can he to your designs oppose,
 Naked of friends, and round beset with foes ?
 If Pharaoh's doubtful succour he should use,
 A foreign aid would more incense the Jews ,
 Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring,
 Foment the war, but not support the King , 200
 Nor would the royal party e'er unite
 With Pharaoh's arms to assist the Jebusite ,
 Or, if, they should, their interest soon would break
 And with such odious aid make David weak
 All sorts of men, by my successful arts
 Abhorring kings, estrange their altered hearts
 From David's rule and 'tis the general cry,
 Religion, commonwealth, and liberty
 If you, as champion of the public good,
 Add to their arms a chief of royal blood, 210
 What may not Israel hope, and what applause
 Might such a general gain by such a cause ?
 Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flower,
 Fair only to the sight, but solid power ,
 And nobler is a limited command,
 Given by the love of all your native land,
 Than a successive title, long and dark,
 Drawn from the mouldy rolls of Noah's ark '

What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
 When flattery soothes and when ambition blinds ? 220
 Desire of power, on earth a vicious weed,
 Yet sprung from high is of celestial seed ,
 In God 'tis glory, and when men aspire,
 'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire
 The ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
 Too full of angel's metal in his frame,
 Unwarly was led from virtue's ways,
 Made drunk with honour and debauched with praise
 Half loth and half consenting to the ill,
 For loyal blood within him struggled still, 230
 He thus replied ' And what pretence have I
 To take up arms for public liberty ?
 My father governs with unquestioned right,
 The faith's defender and mankind's delight,

Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws,
 And Heaven by wonders has espoused his cause
 Whom has he wronged in all his peaceful reign ?
 Who sues for justice to his throne in vain ?
 What millions has he pardoned of his foes
 Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose ? 240
 Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good,
 Inclined to mercy and averse from blood
 If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
 His crime is God's beloved attribute
 What could he gain his people to betray
 Or change his right for arbitrary sway ?
 Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
 His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train
 If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
 The dog-star heats their brains to this disease 250
 Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
 Turn rebel and run popularly mad ?
 Were he a tyrant, who by lawless might
 Oppressed the Jews and raised the Jebusite,
 Well might I mourn, but nature's holy bands
 Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands,
 The people might assert their liberty,
 But what was right in them were crime in me
 His favour leaves me nothing to require,
 Prevents my wishes and outruns desire, 260
 What more can I expect while David lives ?
 All but his kingly diadem he gives
 And that'—But there he paused, then sighing said,
 'Is justly destined for a worthier head,
 For when my father from his toils shall rest
 And late augment the number of the blest,
 His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
 Or the collateral line, where that shall end
 His brother, though oppressed with vulgar spite,
 Yet dauntless and secure of native right, 270
 Of every royal virtue stands possess,
 Still dear to all the bravest and the best
 His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim,
 His loyalty the King, the world his fame
 His mercy even the offending crowd will find,

For sure he comes of a forgiving kind
 Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree
 Which gives me no pretence to royalty ?
 Yet oh that Fate, propitiously inclined,
 Had raised my birth or had debased my mind, 280
 To my large soul not all her treasure lent,
 And then betrayed it to a mean descent !
 I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
 And David's part disdains my mother's mould
 Why am I scanted by a niggard birth ?
 My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth,
 And, made for empire, whispers me within,
 Desire of greatness is a god-like sin '

Him staggering so when Hell's dire agent found,
 While fainting virtue scarce maintained her ground, 290
 He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies
 ' The eternal God, supremely good and wise,
 Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain
 What wonders are reserved to bless your reign !
 Against your will your arguments have shown,
 Such virtue's only given to guide a throne
 Not that your father's mildness I condemn,
 But manly force becomes the diadem
 'Tis true he grants the people all they crave,
 And more perhaps than subjects ought to have 300
 For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame
 And more his goodness than his wit proclaim
 But when should people strive their bonds to break,
 If not when kings are negligent or weak ?
 Let him give on till he can give no more,
 The thrifty Sanhedrin shall keep him poor ,
 And every shekel which he can receive
 Shall cost a limb of his prerogative
 To ply him with new plots shall be my care,
 Or plunge him deep in some expensive war , 310
 Which when his treasure can no more supply,
 He must with the remains of kingship buy
 His faithful friends our jealousies and fears
 Call Jebusites and Pharaoh's pensioners,
 Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,

He shall be naked left to public scorn
 The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
 My arts have made obnoxious to the State,
 Turned all his virtues to his overthrow,
 And gained our elders to pronounce a foe 320
 His right for sums of necessary gold
 Shall first be pawned, and afterwards be sold,
 Till time shall ever-wanting David draw
 To pass your doubtful title into law
 If not, the people have a right supreme
 To make their kings, for kings are made for them
 All empire is no more than power in trust,
 Which, when resumed, can be no longer just
 Succession, for the general good designed,
 In its own wrong a nation cannot bind 330
 If altering that the people can relieve,
 Better one suffer than a nation grieve
 The Jews well know their power ere Saul they chose
 God was their King, and God they durst depose
 Urge now your piety, your filial name,
 A father's right and fear of future fame,
 The public good, that universal call,
 To which even Heaven submitted, answers all
 Nor let his love enchant your generous mind,
 'Tis Nature's trick to propagate her kind 340
 Our fond begetters, who would never die,
 Love but themselves in their posterity
 Or let his kindness by the effects be tried,
 Or let him lay his vain pretence aside
 God said, He loved your father, could He bring
 A better proof than to anoint him King ?
 It surely showed, He loved the shepherd well
 Who gave so fair a flock as Israel
 Would David have you thought his darling son ?
 What means he then to alienate the crown ? 350
 The name of godly he may blush to bear,
 'Tis after God's own heart to cheat his heir
 He to his brother gives supreme command,
 To you a legacy of barren land,
 Perhaps the old harp on which he thrums his lays
 Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise

Then the next morn, a prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous eyes,
Sees through the thin disguises of your arts,
And marks your progress in the people's hearts, 360
Though now his mighty soul its grief contains,
He meditates revenge who least complains,
And like a lion, slumbering in the way
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
His fearless foes within his distance draws,
Constrains his roaring and contracts his paws,
Till at the last, his time for fury found,
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground,
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears, 370
Your case no tame expedients will afford,
Resolve on death or conquest by the sword,
Which for no less a stake than life you draw,
And self-defence is Nature's eldest law
Leave the warm people no considering time,
For then rebellion may be thought a crime
Prevail yourself of what occasion gives,
But try your title while your father lives,
And, that your arms may have a fair pretence,
Proclaim you take them in the King's defence, 380
Whose sacred life each minute would expose
To plots from seeming friends and secret foes
And who can sound the depth of David's soul
Perhaps his fear his kindness may control
He fears his brother, though he loves his son,
For plighted vows too late to be undone

Doubt not but, when he most affects the frown,
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown
Secure his person to secure your cause
They who possess the Prince possess the laws ' 390

He said, and this advice above the rest
With Absalom's mild nature suited best,
Unblamed of life (ambition set aside),
Not stained with cruelty nor puffed with pride,
How happy had he been, if Destiny

Had higher placed his birth or not so high !
 His kingly virtues might have claimed a throne
 And blessed all other countries but his own ,
 But charming greatness since so few refuse ,
 'Tis juster to lament him than accuse 400
 Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,
 With blandishments to gain the public love,
 To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
 And popularly prosecute the plot
 To further this, Achitophel unites
 The malcontents of all the Israelites,
 Whose differing parties he could wisely join
 For several ends to serve the same design
 The best (and of the princes some were such),
 Who thought the power of monarchy too much, 410
 Mistaken men and patriots in their hearts,
 Not wicked, but seduced by impious arts ,
 By these the springs of property were bent
 And wound so high they cracked the government
 The next for interest sought to embroil the state,
 To sell their duty at a dearer rate,
 And make their Jewish markets of the throne,
 Pretending public good to serve their own
 Others thought kings an useless heavy load,
 Who cost too much and did too little good 420
 These were for laying honest David by
 On principles of pure good husbandry
 With them joined all the haranguers of the throng
 That thought to get preferment by the tongue
 Who follow next a double danger bring,
 Not only hating David, but the King ,
 The Solymaeen rout, well versed of old
 In godly faction and in treason bold,
 Cowering and quaking at a conqueror's sword,
 But lofty to a lawful prince restored, 430
 Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot begun
 And scorned by Jebusites to be outdone
 Hot Levites headed these , who pulled before
 From the ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
 Resumed their cant, and with a zealous cry
 Pursued their old beloved theocracy,

Where Sanhedrin and priest enslaved the nation
 And justified their spoils by inspiration ,
 For who so fit for reign as Aaron's race,
 If once dominion they could found in grace ? 440
 These led the pack , though not of surest scent,
 Yet deepest mouthed against the government
 A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed
 Of the true old enthusiastic breed
 'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
 Nothing to build and all things to destroy
 But far more numerous was the herd of such
 Who think too little and who talk too much
 These out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
 Adored their fathers' God and property, 450
 And by the same blind benefit of Fate
 The Devil and the Jebusite did hate
 Born to be saved even in their own despite,
 Because they could not help believing right
 Such were the tools , but a whole Hydra¹ more
 Remains of sprouting heads too long to score
 Some of their chiefs were princes of the land ,
 In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
 A man so various that he seemed to be
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome 460
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
 Was everything by starts and nothing long ,
 But in the course of one revolving moon
 Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon ,
 Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
 Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking
 Blest madman, who could every hour employ
 With something new to wish or to enjoy¹
 Railing and praising were his usual themes,
 And both, to show his judgement, in extremes 470
 So over violent or over civil
 That every man with him was God or Devil
 In squandering wealth was his peculiar art ,
 Nothing went unrewarded but desert
 Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,

¹ The hydra was a fabulous monster with a hundred heads As fast as one head was cut off, two more grew in its place

He had his jest, and they had his estate
 He laughed himself from court, then sought relief
 By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief
 For spite of him, the weight of business fell
 On Absalom and wise Achitophel,
 Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
 He left not faction, but of that was left

480

Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
 Of lords below the dignity of verse
 Wits, warriors, commonwealth's-men were the best,
 Kind husbands and mere nobles all the rest
 And therefore in the name of dulness be
 The well-hung Balaam¹ and cold Caleb free,²
 And canting Nadab let oblivion damn
 Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb³
 Let friendship's holy band some names assure,
 Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure
 Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place
 Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace
 Not bull-faced Jonas, who could statutes draw⁴
 To mean rebellion and make treason law
 But he, though bad, is followed by a worse,
 The wretch who Heaven's anointed dared to curse,
 Shimei,⁵ whose youth did early promise bring
 Of zeal to God and hatred to his King,
 Did wisely from expensive sins refrain
 And never broke the Sabbath but for gain
 Nor ever was he known an oath to vent
 Or curse, unless against the government
 Thus heaping wealth by the most ready way
 Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray,

490

500

¹ The Earl of Huntingdon was very fluent of speech. He insisted on proposing Monmouth's health at a Lord Mayor's dinner in 1699, but was afterwards reconciled to Charles.

² Lord Grey was a zealous supporter of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Monmouth. He was concerned in the Ryehouse Plot, and, later, helped by his cowardice to lose the battle of Sedgemoor.

³ Lord Howard being compelled when in prison to take the sacrament in order to assert his innocence, is said to have taken it in 'lamb's wool', a mixture of ale and apples.

⁴ Sir William Jones drew the Habeas Corpus Act. He conducted the prosecutions during the reign of terror caused by the Popish Plot.

⁵ Shingsby Bethel was noted for his fanaticism and avarice.

The City, to reward his pious hate
 Against his master, chose him magistrate
 His hand a vare¹ of justice did uphold,
 His neck was loaded with a chain of gold 510
 During his office treason was no crime,
 The sons of Belial had a glorious time,
 For Shimei, though not prodigal of pelf,
 Yet loved his wicked neighbour as himself
 When two or three were gathered to declaim
 Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
 Shimei was always in the midst of them
 And, if they cursed the King when he was by,
 Would rather curse than break good company
 If any durst his factious friends accuse, 520
 He packed a jury of dissenting Jews,
 Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
 Would free the suffering saint from human laws
 For laws are only made to punish those
 Who serve the King, and to protect his foes
 If any leisure time he had from power,
 Because 'tis sin to misemploy an hour,
 His business was by writing to persuade
 That kings were useless and a clog to trade
 And that his noble style he might refine, 530
 No Rechabite more shunned the fumes of wine
 Chaste were his cellars, and his shrivel board
 The grossness of a city feast abhorred
 His cooks with long disuse then trade forgot,
 Cool was his kitchen, though his brains were hot
 Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
 But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews
 For towns once burnt such magistrates require
 As dare not tempt God's providence by fire
 With spiritual food he fed his servants well, 540
 But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel
 And Moses' laws he held in more account
 For forty days of fasting in the mount
 To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
 Would tire a well-breathed witness of the plot

¹ A little white staff of office, from the Spanish *vare*, a wand

Yet, Corah, thou shalt from oblivion pass,
 Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
 High as the serpent of thy metal made,
 While nations stand secure beneath thy shade
 What though his birth were base, yet comets rise
 From earthy vapours, ere they shine in skies
 Prodigious actions may as well be done
 By weaver's issue as by prince's son
 This arch-attester for the public good
 By that one deed ennobles all his blood
 Who ever asked the witnesses' high race
 Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace?
 Ours was a Levite,¹ and as time went then,
 His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen
 Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud, 560
 Sure signs he neither choleric was nor proud
 His long chin proved his wit, his saint-like grace
 A church vermilion and a Moses' face
 His memory, miraculously great,
 Could plots exceeding man's belief repeat,
 Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
 For human wit could never such devise
 Some future truths are mingled in his book,
 But where the witness failed, the prophet spoke
 Some things like visionary flights appear, 570
 The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where,
 And gave him his Rabbinical degree
 Unknown to foreign University²
 His judgement yet his memory did excel,
 Which pieced his wondrous evidence so well
 And suited to the temper of the times,
 Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes
 Let Israel's foes suspect his heavenly call
 And rashly judge his writ apocryphal,
 Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made, 580
 He takes his life who takes away his trade
 Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
 The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace

¹ Titus Oates was a clergyman of the Church of England
 Oates called himself a Doctor of Divinity of the University of
 Salamanca

Should whet my memory, though once forgot,
 To make him an appendix of my plot
 His zeal to Heaven made him his Prince despise,
 And load his person with indignities
 But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
 Indulging latitude to deeds and words
 And Corah might for Agag's¹ murder call, 590
 In terms as coarse as Samuel used to Saul²
 What others in his evidence did join,
 The best that could be had for love or coin,
 In Corah's own predicament will fall,
 For Witness is a common name to all

Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
 Deluded Absalom forsakes the court,
 Impatient of high hopes, urged with renown,
 And fired with near possession of a crown
 The admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise 600
 And on his goodly person feed their eyes
 His joy concealed, he sets himself to show,
 On each side bowing popularly low,
 His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames
 And with familiar ease repeats their names
 Thus formed by nature, furnished out with arts,
 He glides unfelt into their secret hearts
 Then with a kind compassionating look,
 And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
 Few words he said, but easy those and fit, 610
 More slow than Hybla-drops³ and far more sweet
 'I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate,
 Though far unable to prevent your fate
 Behold a banished man, for your dear cause
 Exposed a prey to arbitrary laws'

¹ Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey, the magistrate before whom Oates first swore to the truth of the Popish Plot, was shortly afterwards found dead near Primrose Hill. The supporters of Oates said that Godfrey was murdered by the Catholics. Their opponents declared that the murder was committed by the Protestants in order to give colour to their accusations, and because Godfrey was known to be friendly to the Catholics.

² For the reference to Agag see 1 Sam. xv.

³ Hybla was famous for honey.

Yet oh that I alone could be undone,
 Cut off from empire, and no more a son !
 Now all your liberties a spoil are made,
 Egypt and Tyrus intercept your trade,
 And Jebusites your sacred rites invade 620
 My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
 Charmed into ease, is careless of his fame,
 And, bribed with petty sums of foreign gold,
 Is grown in Bathsheba's embraces old ,
 Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys,
 And all his power against himself employs
 He gives, and let him give, my right away ,
 But why should he his own and yours betray ?
 He, only he can make the nation bleed,
 And he alone from my revenge is freed 630
 Take then my tears (with that he wiped his eyes),
 'Tis all the aid my present power supplies
 No court-informer can these arms accuse ,
 These arms may sons against their fathers use
 And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign
 May make no other Israelite complain '

Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail,
 But common interest always will prevail ,
 And pity never ceases to be shown
 To him who makes the people's wrongs his own 640
 The crowd that still believe their kings oppress
 With lifted hands their young Messiah bless
 Who now begins his progress to ordain
 With chariots, horsemen, and a numerous train ,
 From east to west his glories he displays
 And, like the sun, the promised land surveys
 Fame runs before him as the morning star,
 And shouts of joy salute him from afar ,
 Each house receives him as a guardian god
 And consecrates the place of his abode 650
 But hospitable treats did most commend
 Wise Issachar, his wealthy western friend ¹
 This moving court that caught the people's eyes,
 And seemed but pomp, did other ends disguise ,

¹ Thynne was not noted for wisdom 'Issachar is a strong ass'

Achitophel had formed it, with intent
To sound the depths and fathom, where it went,
The people's hearts, distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength before they came to blows
Yet all was coloured with a smooth pretence
Of specious love and duty to their prince 660
Religion and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat and always please,
Are often urged, and good king David's life
Endangered by a brother and a wife
Thus in a pageant show a plot is made,
And peace itself is war in masquerade
Oh foolish Israel ! never warned by ill !
Still the same bait, and circumvented still !
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health imagine a disease, 670
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree ?
What shall we think ? Can people give away
Both for themselves and sons their native sway ?
Then they are left defenceless to the sword
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord,
And laws are vain by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestioned can those laws destroy
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
And kings are only officers in trust, 680
Then this resuming covenant was declared
When kings were made, or is for ever barred
If those who gave the sceptre could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity,
How then could Adam bind his future race ?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place ?
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall ?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand 690
Add that the power, for property allowed,
Is mischievously seated in the crowd,
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolved by might ?
Nor is the people's judgement always true

The most may err as grossly as the few,
 And faultless kings run down by common cry
 For vice, oppression, and for tyranny
 What standard is there in a fickle rout,
 Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out ? 700
 Nor only crowds but Sanhedrims may be
 Infected with this public lunacy,
 And share the madness of rebellious times,
 To murder monarchs for imagined crimes
 If they may give and take whene'er they please,
 Not kings alone, the Godhead's images,
 But government itself at length must fall
 To nature's state, where all have right to all
 Yet grant our lords, the people, kings can make,
 What prudent men a settled throne would shake ? 710
 For whatsoever their sufferings were before,
 That change they covet makes them suffer more
 All other errors but disturb a state,
 But innovation is the blow of fate
 If ancient fabrics nod and threat to fall,
 To patch the flaws and buttress up the wall,
 Thus far 'tis duty but here fix the mark,
 For all beyond it is to touch our ark
 To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
 Is work for rebels who base ends pursue, 720
 At once divine and human laws control,
 And mend the parts by ruin of the whole
 The tampering world is subject to this curse,
 To physic their disease into a worse

Now what relief can righteous David bring ?
 How fatal 'tis to be too good a king !
 Friends he has few, so high the madness grows,
 Who dare be such must be the people's foes
 Yet some there were even in the worst of days,
 Some let me name, and naming is to praise 730

In this short file Barzillai first appears,
 Barzillai, crowned with honour and with years
 Long since the rising rebels he withstood
 In regions waste beyond the Jordan's flood

Unfortunately brave to buoy the state,
 But sinking underneath his master's fate
 In exile with his godlike prince he mourned,
 For him he suffered, and with him returned ¹
 The court he practised, not the courtier's art
 Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart, 740
 Which well the noblest objects knew to chuse,
 The fighting warrior, and recording Muse
 His bed could once a fruitful issue boast,
 Now more than half a father's name is lost
 His eldest hope, with every grace adorned,
 By me, so Heaven will have it, always mourned :
 And always honoured, snatched in manhood's prime
 By unequal fates and Providence's crime
 Yet not before the goal of honour won,
 All parts fulfilled of subject and of son, 750
 Swift was the race, but short the time to run
 Oh narrow circle, but of power divine,
 Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line '
 By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
 Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own
 Thy force infused the fainting Tyrians propped,
 And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopped
 Oh ancient honour ' oh unconquered hand,
 Whom foes unpunished never could withstand '
 But Israel was unworthy of thy name 760
 Short is the date of all immoderate fame
 It looks as Heaven our ruin had designed,
 And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind
 Now, free from earth, thy disencumbered soul
 Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole
 From thence thy kindred legions mayest thou bring
 To aid the guardian angel of thy King
 Here stop, my Muse, here cease thy painful flight ,
 No pinions can pursue immortal height
 Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more, 770
 And tell thy soul she should have fled before ?
 Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
 To hang on her departed patron's hearse ?

¹ The Duke of Ormond was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under Charles I, and was re-appointed by Charles II. He was one of Dryden's patrons.

Now take thy steepy flight from heaven, and see
 If thou canst find on earth another he
 Another he would be too hard to find,
 See then whom thou canst see not far behind
 Zadoc the priest, whom, shunning power and place,
 His lowly mind advanced to David's grace
 With him the Sagan of Jerusalem, 780
 Of hospitable soul and noble stem,
 Him of the western dome, whose weighty sense
 Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence
 The Prophets' sons, by such example led,
 To learning and to loyalty were bred
 For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
 And never rebel was to arts a friend
 To these succeed the pillars of the laws,
 Who best could plead, and best can judge a cause
 Next them a train of loyal peers ascend, 790
 Sharp-judging Adriel, the Muses' friend,¹
 Himself a Muse in Sanhedrin's debate
 True to his Prince, but not a slave of state,
 Whom David's love with honours did adorn
 That from his disobedient son were torn
 Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
 Endued by nature and by learning taught
 To move assemblies, who but only tried
 The worse a while, then chose the better side,
 Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,² 800
 So much the weight of one brave man can do
 Hushai, the friend of David in distress,
 In public storms of manly stedfastness,
 By foreign treaties he informed his youth
 And joined experience to his native truth³

¹ Mulgrave was an intimate friend of Dryden, and was himself a poet. He was the author of the *Essay on Satire* which was attributed to Dryden, and for which Dryden was cudgelled in 1679. When Charles, in 1679, deprived Monmouth of all his offices and honours, he gave the Lord-Lieutenancy of the East Riding of Yorkshire and the government of Hull to Mulgrave.

Savile was a 'Trimmer', the name given to the moderate party which tried to arbitrate between Charles and Shaftesbury. He was one of Charles's most trusted advisers during the last few years of his reign.

³ Laurence Hyde spent the earlier years of his political life as am-

His frugal care supplied the wanting throne,
 Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own
 'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,
 But hard the task to manage well the low
 For sovereign power is too depressed or high, 810
 When kings are forced to sell or crowds to buy
 Indulge me labour more, my weary Muse,
 For Amiel who can Amiel's praise refuse?
 Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
 In his own worth and without title great
 The Sanhedrin long time as chief he ruled,¹
 Their reason guided and their passion cooled
 So dexterous was he in the Crown's defence,
 So formed to speak a loyal nation's sense,
 That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small, 820
 So fit was he to represent them all
 Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
 Whose loose careers his steady skill commend
 They, like the unequal ruler of the day,
 Misguide the seasons and mistake the way,
 While he, withdrawn, at their mad labour smiles
 And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils

These were the chief, a small but faithful band
 Of worthies in the breach who dared to stand
 And tempt the united fury of the land 830
 With grief they viewed such powerful engines bent
 To batter down the lawful government
 A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
 In Sanhedrins to plume the regal rights,
 The true successor from the Court removed,
 The plot by hireling witnesses improved
 These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
 They showed the King the danger of the wound,
 That no concessions from the throne would please,
 But lenitives fomented the disease, 840

bassadoi at various foreign courts He spent some time in Poland, and was sent more than once to negotiate with the Netherlands

¹ Seymour, later Sir Edward Seymour, was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1673-9 He opposed the Exclusion Bill, but afterwards supported the Revolution

That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
 Was made the lure to draw the people down,
 That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
 Had turned the plot to ruin Church and State,
 The council violent, the rabble worse,
 That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse

With all these loads of injuries opprest,
 And long revolving in his careful breast
 The event of things, at last his patience tired,
 Thus from his royal throne, by Heaven inspired, 850
 The godlike David spoke, with awful fear
 His train their Maker in their master hear

' Thus long have I, by native mercy swayed,
 My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delayed,
 So willing to forgive the offending age,
 So much the father did the king assuage
 But now so far my clemency they slight,
 The offenders question my forgiving right
 That one was made for many, they contend,
 But 'tis to rule, for that's a monarch's end 860
 They call my tenderness of blood my fear,
 Though manly tempers can the longest bear
 Yet since they will divert my native course,
 'Tis time to show I am not good by force
 Those heaped affronts that haughty subjects bring
 Are burdens for a camel, not a king
 Kings are the public pillars of the State,
 Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight
 If my young Samson will pretend a call
 To shake the column, let him share the fall, 870
 But oh that yet he would repent and live!
 How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
 With how few tears a pardon might be won
 From nature, pleading for a darling son!
 Poor pitied youth, by my paternal care
 Raised up to all the height his frame could bear!
 Had God ordained his fate for empire born,
 He would have given his soul another turn
 Gulled with a patriot's name, whose modern sense

Is one that would by law supplant his prince , 880
 The people' brave, the politician's tool ,
 Never was patriot yet but was a fool
 Whence comes it that religion and the laws
 Should more be Absalom's than David's cause ?
 His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
 Was never thought endued with so much grace
 Good heavens, how faction can a patriot paint !
 My rebel ever proves my people's saint
 Would they impose an heir upon the throne ?
 Let Sanhedrims be taught to give their own 890
 A king's at least a part of government,
 And mine as requisite as their consent
 Without my leave a future king to choose
 Infers a right the present to depose
 True, they petition me to approve their choice
 But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice
 My pious subjects for my safety pray,
 Which to secure, they take my power away
 From plots and treasons Heaven preserve my years,
 But save me most from my petitioners 900
 Unsatiated as the barren womb or grave,
 God cannot grant so much as they can crave
 What then is left but with a jealous eye
 To guard the small remains of royalty'
 The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
 And the same law teach rebels to obey
 Votes shall no more established power control,
 Such votes as make a part exceed the whole
 No groundless clamours shall my friends remove
 Nor crowds have power to punish ere they prove , 910
 For gods and godlike kings their care express
 Still to defend their servants in distress
 Oh that my power to saving were confined !
 Why am I forced, like Heaven, against my mind
 To make examples of another kind ?
 Must I at length the sword of justice draw ?
 Oh cursed effects of necessary law !
 How ill my fear they by my mercy scan !
 Beware the fury of a patient man
 Law they require, let Law then show her face , 920

They could not be content to look on Grace,
 Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye
 To tempt the terror of her front and die
 By their own arts, 'tis righteous^{ly} decreed,
 Those dire artificers of death shall bleed
 Against themselves their witnesss will swear
 Till, viper-like, their mother-plot they tear,
 And suck for nutriment that bloody gore
 Which was their principle of life before
 Their Behal with their Beelzebub will fight, 330
 Thus on my foes my foes shall do me right
 Nor doubt the event, for factious crowds engage
 In their first onset all their brutal rage
 Then let them take an unresisted course,
 Retire and traverse, and delude their force
 But when they stand all breathless, urge the fight
 And rise upon them with redoubled might
 For lawful power is still superior found,
 When long driven back at length it stands the ground '

He said The Almighty, nodding, gave consent, 940
 And peals of thunder shook the firmament
 Henceforth a series of new time began,
 The mighty years in long procession ran,
 Once more the godlike David was restored,
 And willing nations knew their lawful lord